

Deconstructing Teacher-Student Interactions in Culturally Diverse Urban Low

Achieving Elementary Classrooms

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Abstract

Based on the growing cultural diversity in United States public schools, the first focus of the present study was on deconstructing observation logs in culturally diverse, urban, low-achieving elementary school classrooms in the Midwest. The observation logs detailed the teacher-student interactions that occurred in one elementary school during the 2014-2015 school year while teachers received culturally responsive teaching training based on Gay's research. The present study was founded on the premise that due to the varying needs of culturally diverse learners, it is necessary to explore what the teacher-student interactions are in urban, low-achieving elementary schools.

The second focus of the present study was to determine if the themes that emerged from the deconstruction of observation logs were reflective of Gay's (2000) culturally responsive teaching (CRT) model. Previous researchers who focused on observing effective teacher-student interactions have outlined several teaching practices that have been found to yield positive academic achievement and social development of students. Some of the effective practices include providing classrooms that are well organized and managed, and emotionally and instructionally supportive. Gay's culturally responsive teaching model describes effective teaching of culturally diverse students. Gay's model includes six characteristics: validating, comprehensive, multidimensional, empowering, transformative, and emancipatory.

A qualitative phenomenological research design methodology was used in this study. The deconstruction of the data involved the affinity diagramming process as described by Tague (2004). Five themes emerged from the deconstruction of the data and those themes were compared to Gay's CRT model. This comparison illustrated that

teacher-student interactions involving language development of linguistically diverse students in culturally diverse, urban, low achieving, elementary classrooms were reflective of effective culturally responsive teaching practices.

Dedication

For Mikal I and Mikal II, thank you for being the best parts of every day. This arduous journey was only possible because of your love and encouragement. Mikal II, my loving, hilarious, hardworking toddler, you sat next to me day after day working on your letters, shapes, numbers and counting while I wrote each version of my dissertation. Your determination, patience and understanding were all I needed to keep going. Mikal I, you are more than a husband to me. You are everything. You help me to be the best version of myself. Quitting was never an option and you made sure I knew the only end for this process was to defend.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Teachers and students in elementary schools have thousands of interactions daily (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2010b). Teacher-student interactions have been the focus of determining measurable indicators of effective teaching for the past decade (Kane, McCaffrey, Miler, & Staiger, 2013). Effective teaching has been a priority of educational research and continues to grow in importance as states, districts, and individual schools implement reform initiatives (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2010b). As a result of the growing ethnic, racial, cultural, social, and linguistic diversity of public schools in the United States, a focus on teacher-student interactions in diverse environments is important to further the discussions of effective teaching (Gay, 2010; McMakin, 2012; Nagarkar, 2011).

In an increasingly diverse academic environment with a continued focus on effective teacher-student interactions, being intentional about the way culture enhances curriculum is a critical part of being a teacher, according to Gay (2000), Kozleski (2010), Stroder (2008), and Tomlinson (2015). Classrooms that have been created to foster academic success by developing cultural competence, the skills that allow educators to successfully interact and impact culturally diverse students, include students who are able to manage and enhance not only their own learning, but also the learning of their classmates (Averill, Anderson, & Drake, 2015; Mayfield, 2012; Tomlinson, 2015). Students in classrooms where their culture is seen as an asset to learning have the opportunity to see the world from multiple perspectives and to identify structures that could present barriers to their achievement (Gay, 2000; Kozleski, 2010). Teachers who

know how to navigate the complexities of culture in order to utilize the diverse cultural backgrounds of their students to enhance curriculum are using strategies referred to as culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2000; Kozleski, 2010; Stroder, 2008; Tomlinson, 2015).

Gay (2000), Ford (2010), and Mette, Nieuwenhuizen, and Hvidston (2016) theorized that the use of culturally responsive teaching strategies develops teachers' cultural awareness, and allows teachers to utilize students' cultures intentionally to positively affect academic success and engagement with school. According to Nagarkar (2011), "There is a need for research that examines the relationships among actual culturally responsive behaviors across a variety of situations [using] more direct means (e.g., direct observation, videotaped sessions) for assessing this construct" (pp. 113-114). This study evaluated culturally responsive behaviors in culturally diverse classrooms using observation data to determine how teachers are meeting the needs of culturally diverse students through instructional practices.

Background

The target population for this study was composed of teachers of kindergarten through 5th grade students in an urban, culturally diverse, low-achieving school district in the Midwest of the United States. District X consisted of over 30 elementary schools. Of the 30 elementary schools, one school was represented in the archival data obtained for the current study. The elementary school from which data for this study were used was of interest for the present study because of the phenomena of focused, teacher-student interactions in an urban, culturally diverse, low-achieving elementary school.

At Elementary School X, at least 89% of students were economically disadvantaged and the Hispanic and Black populations exceeded 65% of the schools' total population of students (Kansas Department of Education, 2016). Elementary School X consisted of similar demographics to the average of District X. In District X, 90% of students who qualified for free and reduced lunch, and the Black and Hispanic student population for the district also exceeded 65% (Kansas Department of Education, 2016).

At Elementary School X, 47% of students were Black, 23% were Hispanic, 17% were White, and 13% of students fell into the Other category, which included students of mixed races, Asian students and other racial groups (Kansas Department of Education, 2016). Of the Black students who attended this school, 39.2% met grade level expected achievement on the state standardized test for the 2013-2014 school year, with 50% of White students meeting or exceeding grade level expectations (Kansas Department of Education, 2016).

The demographics of the teachers and staff in Elementary School X consisted of 31% Black, 3% Hispanic and 65% White, and are compared to student demographics in Table 1 (Elementary School X, 2015). The elementary school for the current study contained a higher population of minority educators than the national average for public schools even though the majority of teachers in Elementary School X were from different racial groups than the majority of students.

Table 1

Student and Educator Race Percentages

Race	Nationwide Students ^a	Statewide Students ^b	District X		
			District Students ^b	Elementary Students ^b	Teachers ^b
Black	16.0	7.1	34.0	47.0	31.0
Hispanic	25.0	18.4	45.5	23.0	3.0
White	50.0	65.9	12.6	17.0	65.0

Note. Adapted from *The Condition of Education*, Retrieved from

https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cge.asp; “Kansas Department of Education”, Retrieved from http://ksreportcard.ksde.org/archive.aspx?org_no=D0500&bldg_no=8352&rpt_type=1

^a. Percentages were reported for 2013.

^b. Percentages were reported for 2014.

Hramiak (2015) found the use of culturally responsive teaching strategies offers several benefits for culturally diverse students and teachers. Examples include, acknowledgement of students’ cultures as valuable, and there is celebration of each other’s cultures in the classroom. Hramiak (2015), Averill et al. (2015), and Rodriguez (2013) determined that the use of culturally responsive teaching strategies can provide teachers with tools to use to enhance involvement of culturally diverse parents, ultimately having a greater impact on the school culture as a whole.

Mayfield (2012) analyzed cultural responsiveness in a middle school using covert and overt observations and interviews. Mayfield’s (2012) found that cultural responsiveness was evident in nearly all facets of the school environment. The school

used in Mayfield's study was a school that showed success with closing the achievement gap between students of color and White students. Averill, Anderson, and Drake (2015) reported on the effectiveness of developing cultural responsiveness through the use of teacher noticing, intentionally identifying specific teacher actions related to effective teaching. The researchers first applied the strategy of coaching teachers through rehearsals to use noticing to reflect on practices (Averil et al., 2015). The study findings were that further exploration of the multifaceted pedagogical practice would be beneficial (Averil et al., 2015). Nunez (2011) utilized Richards, Brown, and Forde's (2006) Culturally Responsive Pedagogy framework in the analysis of cultural responsive practices in a high school based on teacher surveys. This study found that in order for teachers to move beyond building tolerance in their classrooms and facilitating students accepting each other's differences to achieve significant student gains, teachers needed cultural proficiency training and development (Nunez, 2011).

Other researchers have determined that implementation of culturally responsive teaching has a positive effect on the achievement of diverse students (Ford, 2010; Ford, Stuart, & Vakil, 2015; Harmon, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 2010). Studies such as the ones conducted by Boykin et al. (2005) included a report on the effects of viewing students of color's cultural behaviors as assets instead of deficits. This focus on assets results in increased engagement. Other researchers have found that teachers impose conscious or unconscious race-based expectations of students' abilities on culturally diverse students while they are teaching them (Ferguson, 2003; Oakes, 2003). Preconceived bias and racially-based expectations can affect the way teachers teach culturally diverse students.

Researchers such as Rodriguez (2013) studied teacher self-reported knowledge of culturally responsive teaching. This study quantitatively examined, through the use of a survey, teachers' self-reported knowledge of culturally responsive teaching pedagogy, strategies, and efficacy beliefs (Rodriguez, 2013). Other researchers, such as Stroder (2008), examined teacher beliefs and also completed observations of two highly effective teachers in an elementary school for approximately eight weeks. While research has been conducted on the development of culturally responsive teaching (CRT) (Gay, 2002; Shealey, McHatton, & Wilson, 2011; Siwatu, 2007, 2011), the benefit of CRT (Mayfield, 2012), and even the analysis of observations of CRT (Gorham, 2013; King, 2014), no studies focused on the use of direct observations to deconstruct teacher-student interactions in an urban, low-achieving elementary school setting during a school year teachers were receiving culturally responsive teaching professional development. Additionally, researchers who have studied CRT have not focused on school-wide observations that spanned an entire school year.

The professional development in Elementary School X during the 2014-2015 school year focused on a book study of the text, *How to Teach Students Who Don't Look Like You: Culturally Responsive Teaching Strategies* by Davis (2012). The administrators of Elementary School X chose the book. The goal of the professional development was to mitigate the effects of teacher-student cultural variances, and create an inclusive environment. The shared experience of the teachers receiving culturally responsive professional development during the school year the observations were conducted provided insight into the context of the school environment and the needs of the building. The school building administrators who decided on the focus for

professional development determined there was a need to provide a more inclusive and responsive environment.

Statement of the Problem

Although culturally responsive teaching has been studied in schools that are closing the achievement gap with teachers who are considered effective, and researchers have studied Gay's model of culturally responsive teaching, there has been no evidence of the use of direct observations to deconstruct teacher-student interactions in culturally diverse, low-achieving elementary school classrooms in the Midwest of the United States during a school year teachers received culturally responsive teaching professional development. In the increasingly diverse environment of urban, low-achieving schools, there is a need to know if the interactions teachers are having with students are meeting the standards of culturally responsive teaching as stated by researchers such as Gay (2000). Research that determines, through the use of direct observation data, if observations of teacher-student interactions in a culturally diverse, low-achieving, urban elementary school will be reflective of culturally responsive teaching examined during professional development is still needed.

Purpose of the Study

According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2008), "The purpose refers to *how* you will go about addressing the problem—that is, who will be involved and what perceptions they have that are germane to your problem" (pp. 62). Based on Bloomberg and Volpe's explanation of the purpose statement in a research study, the first purpose of the present study was to deconstruct the observations of teacher-student interactions in culturally diverse, urban, low-achieving elementary school classrooms in the Midwest. A second

purpose was to compare the direct observations of teacher-student interactions to Gay's culturally responsive teaching model.

Significance of the Study

“Educators, psychologists, social constructivists, and sociologists have all contributed to the growing interest in targeting interventions toward improvements in the quality of teachers’ interactions with children” (Gablinske, 2014, p. 13). With the student population in urban, low-achieving elementary schools being predominantly students of color, an analysis of the teacher-student interactions in those settings are the foundation to determining what interventions will support student academic and social-emotional growth and achievement. The results of this study provided feedback to Elementary School X about the implementation of strategies or interventions discussed during the professional development on culturally responsive teaching. This feedback will provide the principals of Elementary School X, as well as the school district administrators, with information to inform decisions regarding professional development for teachers in culturally diverse, low-achieving elementary schools. The current study will provide possible focus areas for future professional development for Elementary X. The methodology could be of interest to other elementary school principals within the school district and also outside of the school district because it could be used for other schools to determine the implementation of practices reviewed during professional development, and teachers’ ability to meet the varying needs of culturally diverse students.

Additionally, the current study will provide a rationale for the creation of a culturally responsive observation tool to support teachers’ implementation of cultural responsiveness, which could be used by other educators who study culturally responsive

teaching. The use of direct observation data to determine what the teacher-student interactions are in culturally diverse classrooms could be of interest to other culturally responsive researchers. The method used in the present study could be used to gain additional insights into teacher instructional practices with a focus on culturally diverse, low-achieving, elementary school classrooms.

Delimitations

Lunenburg and Irby (2008) defined delimitations as “Self-imposed boundaries set by the researcher on the purpose and scope of the study” (p. 134). A delimitation of the current study was the inclusion of teachers in a public, urban, low-achieving school district in the Midwest during the 2014-2015 school year. Additionally, only one elementary school from District X was included in the study.

Assumptions

According to Lunenburg and Irby (2008), “Assumptions are postulates, premises, and propositions that are accepted as operational for purposes of the research” (p. 135). The present study was based on the following assumptions: (a) teachers taught lessons typical of their everyday teaching practices during observations, (b) teachers attended the culturally responsive teaching professional development, (c) teachers attempted to implement strategies and philosophies learned from the professional development on culturally responsive teaching. The assumptions of the present study were based on the context of the study, which was an urban, low-achieving elementary school where teachers received culturally responsive teaching professional development.

Research Questions

The research questions for the current study were developed based on the problem statement and purposes of the study. The following research questions guided the current study.

RQ1. What themes emerged from the deconstructing of direct observations of teacher-student interactions?

RQ2. Were the themes that emerged from the deconstructing of the observation logs reflective of Gay's culturally responsive teaching model?

Definition of Terms

Six terms have been identified as necessary for the reader to better understand the current study. The definitions are as follows:

Culture. Lindsey, Martinez, and Lindsey (2007) defined culture as the beliefs and practices recognized and shared by a group of people.

Deconstruct. According to Merriam Webster online, deconstruct means to reduce down into basic parts to reinterpret the information and expose meaning.

Culturally Diverse Students. According to Gay (2010), culturally diverse students refers to students who have a variety of cultures or are from varying ethnic groups, races and backgrounds.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy. The theory behind the use of students' cultures to teach curriculum and enhance educational outcomes for diverse learners is referred to by the term culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2000).

Culturally Responsive Teaching. An educator's ability to utilize students' cultural backgrounds and experiences to facilitate their learning by supporting their

intellectual, social, emotional and political growth is culturally responsive teaching (Cramer & Bennett, 2015; Gay, 2000).

Differentiation. Tomlinson (2001) described differentiation as providing diverse learners with different avenues of learning.

High-Quality Teacher-Student Interactions. According to Smart (2014), “[High quality teacher-student interactions are] consistent, stable, respectful, and fair interactions that facilitate the students’ view of their teacher as a secure base” (p. 2).

Organization of the Study

The current study consists of five chapters. Included in Chapter 2 is an analysis of the evolution of observing teacher-student interactions, and the development and application of culturally responsive teaching. Chapter 3 includes the research design, selection of participants, measurement, data collection procedures, data analysis and synthesis, researcher’s role, limitations, and summary. Chapter 4 presents the results of the present study organized by the findings and themes. Chapter 5 includes the study summary, findings related to the literature, and conclusions.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

The purpose of the present study was to deconstruct the teacher-student interactions in culturally diverse, urban elementary school classrooms in the Midwest. A second purpose was to determine alignment of student-teacher interactions with Gay's culturally responsive teaching model. Based on these purposes, the literature review includes three parts: (a) historical perspective of the evaluation of effective teaching, (b) reviewing studies based on observations of teacher-student interactions, (c) and reviewing Gay's culturally responsive teaching model.

Historical Perspective of the Evaluation of Effective Teaching

Gardiner and Kosmitzki (2008), as reported by Smart (2014), "defined high quality teacher-student interactions as consistent, stable, respectful, and fair interactions that facilitate the students' view of their teacher as a secure base" (p. 2). Even just two decades ago, research was inconsistent in defining high-quality teacher-student interactions, and observable actions of what effective teaching looked like (McGuin, 2012). Prior to research conducted by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (2010a, 2010b, 2012, 2013) and Marzano and Toth (2014), evaluations of teacher effectiveness had not yielded nation-wide agreed upon descriptors of what effective teaching looked like. The lack of descriptors of effective teaching made it necessary for school districts and states to develop their own criteria to determine effective teaching. Changes in the way teachers have been evaluated and determining effective teaching have been dictated by major events that occurred in society (Gurl et al., 2016). Additionally, changes in

teacher evaluations were based on landmark reports and research studies that have determined change was needed (Gurl et al., 2016).

In the early 1900's teacher effectiveness was focused on the moral values of teachers (Strong, Grant, & Xu, 2015). Whereas the 1960's and the launch of Sputnik brought about questions regarding the rigor and effectiveness of the educational institutions in the United States (Gurl et al., 2016). In the mid-1960's, the First International Mathematics Study and the First International Science Study compared the nation's educational structures to other countries. These studies later impacted the findings of *A Nation at Risk*, the 1983 study of education that resulted in policy changes to teacher observations and effective teaching (Bracey, 2003; Gurl et al., 2016). There was a second and, later in 1999, a Third International Mathematics and Science study, which yielded information based on videotaping of lessons (Stigler & Hiebert, 1999). This marked an important inclusion in the measurement of effective teaching that was directly related to observing teacher-student interactions in the classroom (Stigler & Hiebert, 1999). One of the results of the Third International Mathematics and Science Study was to improve upon the art and professionalism of teaching (Stigler & Hiebert, 1999). In other words, the results of the Third International Mathematics and Science study determined the need to conceptualize what effective teaching looked like in the classroom.

Fueled by poor performance on national assessments such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress, and international comparisons of students and educational systems such as the Programme for International Student Assessment and the Third International Mathematics and Science studies described earlier, the No Child Left

Behind Act ushered in an era of increasing standardization and privatization in education, with frequent testing of students and other measures (Strong, Grant, & Xu, 2015, p. 16). Research that focused on student achievement and evaluating teachers immediately following the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) centered on highly qualified teachers, or teacher credentials, as outlined in the requirements for NCLB, to determine how to evaluate teachers. Additionally, the NCLB act shifted the focus of teacher improvement to standardized student achievement tests, which caused school districts to emphasize student achievement on nationally normed tests as primary indicators of teacher effectiveness. The shift in the focus on teacher qualifications did not explain the variations in student achievement and gave no viable information about students' social developmental growth (Gentry, 2006; Neill, Guisbond, Schaeffer, Madden, & Legeros, 2004).

According to Marzano (2012), completely revamped teacher evaluation systems became a focus around 2011, ten years after the implementation of NCLB, after a series of reports from the U. S. Department of Education and other studies detailed insufficiencies in the way teachers were being evaluated. The reports discussed how the systems that were already in place did not yield effective teachers, teachers who were able to improve student achievement and social development, nor did the systems to evaluate teachers provide clear methods of professional development for teachers (Marzano, 2012).

Reviewing Studies Based on Observations of Teacher-Student Interactions

After the realization that teacher effectiveness could be better observed or evaluated, researchers started to develop descriptors of what the revised evaluation or

observation systems that would better determine effective teacher-student interactions would include (McGuinn, 2012). Marzano (2012) purported evaluation systems that lead to increased teacher effectiveness would include three characteristics: 1) evaluation systems should be comprehensive, 2) include a developmental scale, and 3) reward growth. Additionally, Marzano (2012) determined there were two purposes for evaluating and observing teachers: 1) measurement, and 2) teacher development.

Another research perspective important to the evolution of observations of effective teaching was the Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) study (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2013). Developing evaluation systems that utilized observation data to determine teacher effectiveness was one of the pillars of measuring effective teaching. The authors of the MET project sought or developed measures to reflect all key aspects of its definition of effective teaching: student surveys to assess the supportiveness of the instructional environment; content tests to assess teachers' knowledge of their subject and how to teach it; observation instruments to assess teachers' classroom practice; and student assessments to measure the learning gains of a teacher's students" (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2013, p. 3).

The MET study was the largest study of teaching in kindergarten through 12th grades (Kane & Staiger, 2012). By 2010, the MET project had collected over 13,000 lessons used to analyze effective teaching. The *Guiding Principles for Improvement-Focused Teacher Evaluation System*, created by the MET project researchers reported the use of multiple research perspectives to create observation systems to deconstruct observable teacher-student interactions was necessary (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2013). The three guiding principles for the improvement-focused teacher evaluation

system were 1) measure effective teaching, 2) ensure high-quality data, 3) and invest in improvement (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2013).

To measure effective teaching, first stakeholders have to decide and define what the behaviors, knowledge, and skills teachers should have that improve student learning are (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2013). There should be layers, or multiple skills being measured (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2013). Ensuring high-quality data means that there is a correlation between teachers scoring higher on the observation measurement tool and having a greater impact on student achievement. For example, researchers in the MET study, after randomly assigning students to teachers, found teachers who scored higher on their observation measurement tool had greater impact on student achievement (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2013).

As the studies of teacher effectiveness progressed and understanding of how to observe teaching to determine high-quality teacher-student interactions solidified, additional studies and observation tools were created. Hamre and Pianta's Teaching through Interactions Framework was applied in the deconstructing of over 4,000 classroom observations (Hamre et al., 2013). Deconstructing is operationally defined as reducing down into basic parts to reinterpret the information and expose meaning (Merriam Webster, 2017). There is a commonly known definition of deconstructing in qualitative research as described by Yacoub (2017) that is different than how the present study is defining deconstructing.

Conclusions based on the MET and the Teaching Through Interactions Framework supported the findings that effective teaching was indeed observable (Bill and Melinda Gates, 2010, 2013; Hamre et al., 2013). Results from the first year of the

MET study provide compelling evidence that effective teaching can be reliably observed and that these observations are associated in meaningful ways with students' perceptions of teachers and with gains on standardized achievement tests (Bill and Melinda Gates, 2010, 2013). However, the results of the MET study also point out a need for more clarity around the components of teaching that produce outcomes and a better understanding of the ways in which these components are organized in typical classrooms. (Bill and Melinda Gates, 2010, 2013)

Recent research on observing teacher-student interactions has transitioned into focusing on testing the frameworks for evaluation (Hamre et al., 2013). The Teaching through Interactions Framework yielded multiple observation tools including the Classroom Assessment Scoring System. Hamre and Pianta (2013) created the evaluation system based on developmental theory to support the conclusion that the daily interactions of students and teachers influence learning and development (Hamre et al., 2013). The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) was a multilevel latent structure used to test the domains of the Teaching through Interactions Framework, which included: emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support. CLASS encompassed specific teacher-student interactions organized by the three broader domains of the Teaching through Interactions Framework, and it was broken down into dimensions and descriptions. Because researchers have previously tested the effectiveness of the Teaching through Interactions domains, the present study references the domains as indicators of effective teaching. The next section of the current study reviews a summary of the three domains of the Teaching through Interactions Framework, which served as the basis for the initial understandings of how observation

logs of teacher-student interactions have evolved in previous research.

Emotional Support. In classrooms where students' needs are effectively met, teachers intentionally plan to support students' social and emotional functions (Hamre & Pianta, 2007; Hamre et al., 2013; Kane et al., 2013). The role and importance emotional support has in the classroom was validated by Maslow (1943) and the studies that followed supported the hierarchy of needs theory (Burlison & Thoron, 2017; Martin & Joomis, 2007). "Lower needs must be satisfied before higher-order needs can be reached. Behaviors will be centered on meeting the needs in the lowest order, and then will progress to higher orders as needs are satisfied" (Burlison & Thoron, 2017, p. 1). The lowest tiers of the hierarchy are first, physiological, then once students are no longer concerned with where they are going to sleep and what they are going to eat, they become concerned with the next tier of needs, which is safety and security (Burlison & Thoron, 2017; Martin & Joomis, 2007; Maslow, 1943).

Educators who facilitate classroom environments that are safe, predictable, consistent, and supportive cultivate students who are able to develop their ability to be autonomous learners in pursuit of their academic success (Hamre et al., 2013; Kane et al., 2013). In safe classrooms, which are emotionally supportive, students are able to problem-solve and think critically about their role in the classroom culture (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2013; Sandilos & DiPerna, 2014). According to Hamre et al. (2013), Connell and Wellborn (1991) developed self-determination theory. "Self-determination (or self-systems) theory suggests that children are most motivated to learn when adults support their need to feel competent, positively related to others, and autonomous" (Hamre et al., 2013, p. 466).

Classroom Organization and Management. A part of having a consistent and predictable environment is the ability for educators to have organization and management in the classroom. The way teachers organize and manage classrooms impacted student motivation and engagement (Beatty-O’Ferrall, Green, & Hanna, 2010). Classrooms that are organized in a way that allow students to practice the skills of self-management and executive functioning through the use of a structured environment with consistent procedures and expectations provide students with opportunities to become advanced developmentally (Hamre et al., 2013). Additionally, culturally responsive research has supported the need for classroom organization as well. In classrooms with culturally diverse students, teachers have to be able to meet the varying needs of students, which requires organization and intentionality (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011). Teachers who are meeting the diverse needs of students consistently differentiate content. Differentiation, which consists of teachers providing various opportunities for students to learn content and demonstrate their learning, requires teachers to consistently implement organizational structures and classroom management (Tomlinson, 2001; Tomlinson & Imbeau, 2012; Wu, 2013). Students in these classrooms are able to achieve academically by focusing on their own individual strengths (Fisher & Frey, 2008; Tomlinson, 2014).

Instructional Support. The goal of the instructional support domain is to provide students with enough support to help them develop their ability to be metacognitive thinkers. Teachers functioning in the instructional support domain scaffold, or gradually release responsibility of the learning over to students (Boyle & Peregoy, 1990; Lee & Schmitt, 2014). The domain of instructional support in the Teaching through Interactions framework is foundationally supported by research on students’ cognitive and language

development (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2010, 2013; Hamre et al., 2013). “This literature highlights the distinction between simply learning facts and gaining ‘usable knowledge’ that is built upon learning how facts are interconnected, organized, and conditioned upon one another” (Hamre et al., 2013, p. 466). Teachers have the opportunity to develop students’ cognitive and language skills by providing instruction to scaffold language and utilize students’ past experiences to enhance the learning environment (Boyle & Peregoy, 1990; Lee & Schmitt, 2014). This ability to help students make learning meaningful is found in culturally responsive teaching research as a method educators used to create authentic learning experiences for children (Sloan, 2008; Zhang, 2014).

Even though consensus in previous research linked teacher-student interactions to achievement and development, one important issue has not been addressed in the literature. There is a need to focus on the observable teacher-student interactions in classrooms with a majority culturally diverse student population (Laughter & Adams, 2012; Rodriguez, 2013).

Summarizing Gay’s Culturally Responsive Teaching Model

The Teaching through Interactions Framework study along with the MET study were the largest studies of observations of teaching to date (Kane et al., 2013). Though some of the indicators of effective teaching based on the findings of the MET and the Teaching through Interactions Framework studies could be used to address diverse learners’ needs, diverse learners were not the focus of either of these studies. Gay (2000) theorized that culturally responsive teaching strategies resulted in positive learning environments for diverse learners (Hohensee, 2013; Szecsi, Vazquez-Montilla, &

Mayberry, 2010). Teachers, who implemented culturally responsive teaching, utilized the diverse cultures of their students to teach their curriculum (Gay, 2000; Gay, 2010; Nunez, 2011; Rodriguez, 2013). Gay (2000) incorporated the art of teaching with the science and sociology of culture and development to provide educators with a blueprint to aid in the success of diverse students. The six characteristics in Gay's (2000) model are: validating, comprehensive, multidimensional, empowering, transformative and emancipatory. A more detailed explanation of each of these characteristics follows.

Validating. Validating teachers use students' strengths to develop them academically and socially (Laughter & Adams, 2012). The learning environment of a validating educator celebrates culture and diversity (Sloan, 2008), and is emotionally supportive. Culture was defined as the beliefs, values, attitudes, customs, traditions, experiences, perspectives, heritages, and contributions of a group of people (Abington-Pitre, 2015; Gay, 2013). Validating educators understand culture is a factor that can impact student learning because students are engaged when curriculum represents their values and perspectives, and gives them the opportunity to utilize their backgrounds to make new connections to their learning (Abington-Pitre, 2015; Gay, 2013). A student is connected to his/her family and community through their ethnic identity, which means teachers have the opportunity to understand how a student's identity is represented, misrepresented or not represented at all in the classroom and curriculum (Abington-Pitre, 2015; Douglass, Lewis, Douglass, Scott, & Garrison-Wade, 2008; Plough, 2016). The validating educator uses multicultural content to add deep culture to the curriculum and learning experience (Mayfield, 2012). Deep culture progresses beyond the surface level addition of cultural celebrations, foods, and customs, to add a rich experience that details

beliefs, ideas, attitudes, and contributions to society by diverse cultures to the curriculum (Rodriguez, 2013; Zhang, 2014).

In a classroom that validates and celebrates culture and diversity, teachers know about the cultural values and perspectives that students have when they enter into the classroom, and are able to provide experiences to validate students' cultural histories intentionally (Mayfield, 2012; Sloan, 2008). The teacher offers an array of cultural experiences where students feel their culture is valued and students learned to value the cultural differences of others (Laughter & Adams, 2012; Sloan, 2008). Teachers incorporate learning styles to teach students through their preferred modes of learning and strengths (Colak, 2015; Hale, 2016; Li, Wray, Wang, & Liu, 2016). Dunn and Dunn (1992) defined learning styles as the way students interact with new information, including the way learners internalize and process new information. Additionally, in validating educators' classrooms, students are engaged in activities that meet their varying needs academically based on interests, as well as abilities. This focus on meeting varying needs of students is also known as differentiation (Tomlinson, 2001). The concept of differentiation emerges from what is currently known about how people learn (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011). "Differentiated classrooms operate on the premise that learning experiences are most effective when they are engaging, relevant and interesting" (Tomlinson, 2001, p. 5). From the premise of the most effective learning experiences, it can be deduced that differentiation requires teachers to always be cognizant of three factors: 1) the authenticity and meaning behind the structuring of their content, 2) the individuality of students, 3) and how learners in the classroom are able to make connections between the content and themselves. "Differentiated instruction is a strategy

that gives students access to the same curriculum, but allows them to acquire the knowledge at different rates. Differentiated instruction further allows students to demonstrate their understanding through a variety of modalities” (Mayfield, 2012, p. 26).

Students having varied learning experiences to meet their needs, as well as students having classrooms that are inclusive of the cultural differences of students can prompt student engagement. Traditional teaching methods, such as lecturing, or whole class instruction, limit teachers’ ability to be responsive to students’ needs and incorporate a variety of cultural experiences and references into the curriculum (Gay, 2000; McDonough, 2012).

Comprehensive. Comprehensive education promotes the idea that classrooms are a collective, shared experience where students work together to excel (Gay, 2000). In a classroom with a culturally responsive educator, the educator holds the belief that the learning experiences of culturally diverse students should be comprehensive. Interpersonal relationships are built between teachers and students (Mayfield, 2012), all students are held to high expectations, and there is a positive learning environment for all students (Coleman, 2012; Plough, 2016).

Building relationships with students requires educators to be able to clearly define how their own cultural perspectives aid or hindered the development of authentic relationships with students (Douglass et al., 2008). Educators, who believe all students can learn, have high expectations of all students and know how to utilize students’ strengths to help them achieve academically (Zhang, 2014). A comprehensive learning environment is positive for students and teachers, which means students are actively engaged with their own learning (Bell, 1998; Ferguson-Patrick, 2012).

A positive learning environment is both inclusive and well managed. Inclusive and well-managed learning environments incorporate strategies such as cooperative learning, and students working together to achieve a collective goal with individual accountability, to give students the opportunity to grow academically and socially (Braxton & Caboni, 2005; Ferguson-Patrick, 2012). In positive learning environments, teachers know how different cultures contribute to society and incorporate the values, traditions, communication and learning styles of various cultures into instruction (Banks et al., 2001). Comprehensive teachers understand that students' cultures affect their learning (Banks et al., 2001). However, there is more to being culturally responsive than just having knowledge about different cultures (Banks et al., 2001). Comprehensive teachers who are determined to have positive learning environments obtain factual information about the particularities of specific ethnic groups (Banks et al., 2001; McDonald, 2010). Additionally, in a positive learning environment, teachers implement equity initiatives, such as opportunities for students to assess and modify the structures of their school that might yield systems that perpetuate inequity in discipline, and academic achievement (Banks et al., 2001; Zhang, 2014). This requires a school-wide focus on being culturally responsive by providing a positive learning environment for students (Salend, 2008).

Schools that move to being culturally responsive become more engaging and more representative of culturally diverse students (Banks et al., 2001). Culturally responsive schools view students' unique characteristics as valuable assets to the learning environment (Banks et al., 2001). A culturally responsive classroom is in direct opposition to traditional methods of instructing. Traditional education includes

classrooms where teachers are the primary owners of learning, meaning teachers impart knowledge on students. This traditional form of education implies that students do not come to school with knowledge and experiences that could be used to explore educational content.

Student-centered approaches to education contrarily, are based on the premise that students should be self-motivated, problem-solvers, who work independently and collaboratively with classmates to expand and broaden their knowledge (Arseven, Sahin, & Kilic, 2016). McDonough (2012) suggested that students should have an active role in making decisions in the classroom, such as how they like to learn and how they want to be assessed. Student-centered classrooms mimic the philosophies of culturally responsive research because in student-centered classrooms, as in culturally responsive classrooms, students' experiences and backgrounds are valued and used to enhance the curriculum (McDonough, 2012).

In addition to students having choice in student-centered classrooms, Temizkan (2010) stressed the importance of students being involved in authentic learning experiences, which are experiences reflective of real life. In student-centered classrooms, students apply content knowledge to real life purposes for the learning. Learning is enhanced by students' individual perceptions, as well as students being given the opportunity to make meaning out of what they are learning when compared to what would be required of them in the real world. Comprehensive cultural responsiveness combines the use of relationships, expectations and positivity to create authentic learning experiences for students (Lemov, 2010). In classrooms that are comprehensive, students

are working together to apply their knowledge to learning experiences based on what they will encounter in their lives.

Multidimensional. Multidimensional educators apply a layered approach to curriculum. The multidimensional teacher intentionally plans instructional opportunities layered across the curriculum and ultimately leads students to have an authentic experience, and opportunity to support equality efforts to enhance achievement (Laughter & Adams, 2012; McMakin, 2012; Douglass et al., 2008). Multidimensional teachers collaborate across disciplines to provide students with knowledge about a particular topic that is relevant and responsive to cultural diversity (Laughter & Adams, 2012). Gay (2000) offered the example of language arts, art, music, and social studies teachers collaborating to teach students about protest. Cooperative learning that involves students exploring, analyzing and addressing problems is found in multidimensional classrooms due to teachers' collaborating to create all-encompassing educational experiences. Teachers employ many strategies to be multidimensional, so students can think critically, have multiple forms of assessment, and start to question the dominate culture's view of truth (Gay, 2000).

Multidimensional education cultivates an environment for students to think critically (Choy & Cheah, 2009; Facione, 2013). Choy and Cheah (2009) prompted students to raise questions about issues that affected them. Multidimensional teachers understand that teachers' perceptions matter and have implications for student learning (Choy & Cheah, 2009). If teachers perceive students lack the skill to think at higher levels, lessons will be absent of rigor and focus (Paige, Smith, & Sizemore, 2015). Rigor is a continuum of thinking (Paige, Smith, & Sizemore, 2015). In the classroom, rigor

should be viewed as having levels of complexity. One method implemented to determine the level of rigor used in a classroom is Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK) (Paige, Smith, & Sizemore, 2015). Webb developed a taxonomy that captures the four levels of rigor:

1. recall
2. application
3. strategic thinking
4. creating new knowledge

The first level of Webb's Depth of Knowledge rigor continuum, recall, involves students completing basic tasks, such as recalling or reproducing knowledge (Hess, 2013). The second level of Webb's Depth of Knowledge continuum, application, requires students to differentiate between multiple concepts or information in a text, as well as describe relationships and determine cause and effect (Hess, 2013). The third level of Webb's DOK is strategic thinking and planning. "Tasks and classroom discourse falling into this category demand the use of planning, reasoning, and higher order thinking processes, such as analysis and evaluation, to solve real-world problems or explore questions with multiple possible outcomes" (Hess, 2013, p. 14). Lastly, creating new knowledge is the final level of Webb's DOK. At the fourth level, "Students are engaged in conducting multi-faceted investigations to solve real-world problems with unpredictable solutions" (Hess, 2013, p. 18).

If teachers see rigor as a variable that can be intentionally manipulated, classroom instruction can facilitate student thinking at more rigorous levels.

If a rigorous education did in fact occur, then one outcome should be a student who is better able to utilize critical thinking skills, better able to analyze information and propositions, to integrate new information into current thinking, to evaluate alternatives, and to modify and improve existing processes or even create new ones ((Paige, Smith, & Sizemore, 2015, p. 5).

Marzano and Toth analyzed over two million data sets. “Less than 6% of observed lessons were devoted to the highest level of cognitively complex task involving hypothesis generation and testing” (Marzano & Toth, 2014, 13). Critical thinking is a focus in a multidimensional educator’s classroom (Gay, 2000; Haynes, Lisic, Goltz, Stein, Harris, 2016). Researchers summarize critical thinking “as a reflection; identification and appraisal of assumptions; inquiry, interpretation and analysis; and reasoning and judgment; with the consideration of context” (Choy & Cheah, 2009, p. 198). Choy and Cheah (2009) stated the way information is presented to students could have an effect on the way they think critically, which is another example of how cultural lenses can affect student achievement.

Duron, Limbach and Waugh (2006) defined critical thinking much more simply “as the ability to analyze and evaluate information” (p. 160). One pattern found in research about critical thinking is that students need to develop the ability to form questions, synthesize information to determine validity, while using creativity to process abstract ideas (Duron, Limbach & Waugh, 2006). Duron et.al. (2006) developed a five-step model teachers could use to help students attain critical thinking skills: 1) determine learning objectives 2) teach through questioning 3) practice before you assess 4) review, refine, and improve 5) provide feedback and assessment of learning.

Multidimensional teachers understand the role of questioning and how it impacts how teachers use assessment. Teachers plan questioning intentionally to open students' minds and give them the opportunity to be questioners themselves. Teacher questioning is just the beginning in multidimensional educators' classrooms (Long, Blankenburg, & Butani, 2005). Due to the complexity of implementing questioning as a teaching strategy, teachers have to ensure their questions are developmentally appropriate and must lead learners down the path to analysis. When teachers use questioning to prompt critical thinking, teachers who are multidimensional apply strategies to hold students to the expectation that everyone in the learning environment is responsible for the development and cultivation of knowledge. Students are not allowed to opt out of answering questions. Teachers employ strategies that require the voices of all students to be heard throughout the lesson to support the academic growth of all students (Gay, 2000).

One method utilized to determine rigor and assessment of a lesson is to examine the lesson objectives selected by teachers. Lesson objectives clearly state what students should be able to do at the conclusion of the instruction (Arreola, 1998). The key to developing quality objectives is to focus on what the students should be able to do, not what the teacher is doing (Arreola, 1998). Additionally, objectives should be linked to the state standards for the school. Lastly, objectives should be used throughout the lesson as a way to assess the effectiveness of the lesson.

Lesson objectives support the focusing of the lesson because they require teachers to be reflective about what they want students to gain from the lesson and how the lesson should support student growth (Ayres, 2014). Focusing lessons using objectives is

important because if all three aspects of a lesson objective are included, then teachers have set the purpose for the lesson and have determined assessment methods. Students are learning within the context of a predetermined standard that would meet the needs of moving along the rigor continuum.

In order for multidimensional educators to determine if students are progressing toward the ability to analyze ideas of truth, teachers should use high expectations, questioning, and assessment to determine strengths, misconceptions and gaps (Gay, 2000). Intentional use of assessment should inform future instruction. Meaningful use of questioning strategies as assessment could drive instruction, ensure responsiveness, and the development of critical thinking skills to question truths (Russell & Stevens, 2012). Having high expectations of all students ensures teachers are supporting the academic and social growth of all students.

Empowering. In order for teachers to be empowering, they have to show students they believe in them (Gay, 2000). Empowering teachers demand the best of students (Dweck, 2006). Students who are empowered to persevere through difficulty develop the self-confidence that will lead them through the successful attainment of their goals. “Empowerment translates into academic competence, personal confidence, courage, and the will to act” (Gay, 2000, p. 32). Teachers who are empowering support the academic progress of students by scaffolding content language and allow students to work cooperatively to build capacity and leadership (Gay, 2000). Teachers, who provide learning opportunities supportive of students’ language and autonomy, organize their classroom and develop instructional supports built on students’ strengths (Gay, 2000).

Utilizing students' strengths and providing instructional support to develop students' content language reflects a belief system that culture plays an important role in the way students learn (Gay, 2000). Dweck (2006) described how beliefs and growth mindsets can bring teachers closer to providing classroom environments which encourage and inspire students, ultimately making teachers empowering educators. Teachers' beliefs impact how they interact with students. How a teacher engages a student's learning depends on the beliefs the teacher has about what the student is able to do (Dweck, 2006; Ford, Stuart & Vakil, 2015; Ozorio, 2014). When teachers are disconnected from the beliefs of their students, this causes them to have lower expectations of culturally and linguistically diverse students (Dweck, 2006; Ford, Stuart, & Vakil, 2015).

Teachers can make culture an invaluable part of learning by relating to the learner individually and gaining an understanding of cultural experiences and backgrounds (Ford, Stuart, & Vakil, 2015; Ozorio, 2014; Rodriguez, 2013). Teachers obtain the ability to experience the classroom through the eyes of their students (Rychly & Graves, 2012). In order to apply culturally responsive pedagogy, teachers have to understand their attitudes and beliefs about cultures different than their own through reflection and professional learning and by acknowledging their potential biases about what students from diverse backgrounds can do (Dweck, 2006; Rychly & Graves, 2012). Teachers make mistakes about students' abilities when they haven't closely examined their own beliefs about culture (Dweck, 2006; Rychly & Graves, 2012). Rychly & Graves (2012) found empowering teachers moved from reflecting on culture to an understanding of their own cultural frame of reference, or the way they view the world. Another way to look at

teacher beliefs is through the evaluation of mindsets. “Mindsets are the assumptions, expectations, and beliefs that guide our behavior and our interactions with others” (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011, p. 18). How teachers respond to students in the classroom can depend upon a teacher’s background, childhood, experiences, and interactions from a very early age (Gay, 2010; Dweck, 2006; Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011, p. 9).

Among other factors, longevity in age makes mindsets in adults difficult to change (Dockterman & Blackwell, 2014; Dweck, 2006; Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011). Empowering teachers have the mindset that they are in a position to be a positive influential part of students’ lives (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011). Dockterman and Blackwell (2014) stated that teachers who are empowering are committed to enriching students’ lives with experiences that build confidence.

Transformative. Gay (2000) described transformative educators as educators who facilitate students’ development of political and personal efficacy. Transformative education teaches students to confront inequality and be change agents (Gay, 2000). Through education that is truly transformative, students built their understanding of political and personal efficacy to tackle social justice issues, and engage in efforts to counteract racism, oppression and exploitation (Gay, 2000). Transformative educators engage students to work toward the goal of promoting social justice, address racism oppression and exploitation, and to collaborate to impact their communities in ways that promote equity and inclusion. Teachers facilitate cooperative learning experiences for students and afford students with the opportunity to develop understandings of political and personal efficacy (Gay, 2000).

Abramson (1971) found the majority of Black students in America in 1955 reported having low political efficacy. Abramson's findings were based on 1,669 high school seniors who completed the Michigan's Survey Research Center study (Abramson, 1971). Political efficacy was defined in two ways. The first way was the sense of integration in the political system (Abramson, 1971). Abramson's study represented one of the founding principles of culturally responsive teaching. Culturally diverse students had to have education that not only encouraged them to engage in the political system, but to cooperatively work to change any systems in place that exacerbated economic, academic, political and social inequity. Abramson's study is an example of how disenfranchised groups of people feel about their engagement in the political realm of society. Diemer and Rapa (2016) defined the second form of political efficacy as having the personal belief that individuals can affect social and political change. Researchers suggest that these two forms of political efficacy represent the external and internal functions of political efficacy: external, assumption that the political system responds to the personal needs of constituents; internal, the assumption that an individual can impact the political system (Dyck & Lascher, 2008). Teachers who are transformative help students navigate their internal and external political efficacy beliefs to become socially and politically aware.

Transformative teachers help students develop personal efficacy - the belief in one's own ability to achieve or be successful (Pernice-Duca & Owens, 2010). Strong personal efficacy is a predictor for scholastic and post-secondary success (Bennett et al., 2004). Personal efficacy impacts students' social emotional growth as well as who they become as adults (Bennet et al., 2004). A part of developing personal efficacy is the

ability to communicate persuasively, informatively and in cognitively complex ways (Bennett et al., 2004). Teachers support students' development of academic language by putting in scaffolds to intentionally support students' linguistic development (Gay, 2000). Language development also allows students to build the confidence to advocate for justice in their communities as well as society.

Students who speak a different language in their home environment than the language they must use while at school, are linguistically diverse (Allen, 2017). However, arguably, even students who speak English at home could also be considered linguistically diverse if the vernacular of the English spoken at home is very different than the standardized language of the English spoken at school (Pullum, 1999). Therefore, linguistic diversity can encompass a great majority of students in a culturally diverse, urban elementary classroom (Pullum, 1999).

Language development is important to self-efficacy beliefs because it has been linked to confidence, motivation, and achievement (Netten, Luyten, Droop, & Verhoeven, 2016) making linguistic diversity an important variable to consider when implementing strategies to support student achievement. Teachers intentionally using strategies to develop students' confidence are evidence of cultural responsiveness.

Students who are multilingual have strengths and abilities that can be enhanced in an inclusive environment which is celebratory of the diversity in language, instead of an exclusive environment where it is viewed as a deficit that needs to be addressed (Shapiro, Cox, Shuck, & Simnitt, 2016). Linguistic diversity requires classroom instruction to be focused on meeting the needs of language development through the use of strategies to aid in the further development of students (Shapiro, Cox, Shuck, & Simnitt, 2016).

Teachers who utilize instruction that is committed to being inclusive and having respect for the resources linguistically diverse learners are bringing to school can build confidence in students in ways that ultimately affect their personal self-efficacy beliefs.

To ignore linguistic diversity in the classroom is equivalent to ignoring the cultural aspect of students, which can have a devaluing effect. Adding to the concern in linguistically diverse classrooms is that the beliefs of teachers can affect how language diversity is valued and if students who are linguistically diverse are seen as members of the learning community or segregated based on the preferred language of English in United States public schools (Haddix, 2010). Transformative educators intentionally plan to support students' political and personal efficacy beliefs, as well as facilitate language development (Gay, 2000).

Emancipatory. Emancipatory teachers inspire students to be creators and autonomous in their pursuit of education. "Students feel connected, engaged, and meaningfully involved when they are addressing relevant issues that reflect their interests, their passions, and their identities" (Fletcher, 2008, p. 1). Emancipatory educators have student-centered classrooms giving students the chance to impact their educational experience working cooperatively with their peers, such as making decisions about school climate and advocating for school improvement (Rodriguez, 2013; Sloan, 2008). Emancipatory educators provide students with opportunities to take ownership of their learning by providing them with linguistic supports that allow them to develop confidence in communicating and changing inequitable systems (Liu, 2016). Students are able to apply their knowledge to analyze historical social histories, issues, problems, and experiences (Gay, 2007). Learners have the opportunity to become change agents

through authentic and intentional cooperative learning experiences (Li, Medwell, Wray, Wang, & Liu, 2016). The emancipatory educator encompasses all of the other characteristics detailed by Gay to create opportunities for students, allowing them to take ownership of their learning and become life-long learners devoted to improving systems that are inequitable.

Gay created a culturally responsive teaching model to help diminish the effects of cultural differences in teachers and students on culturally diverse students in classrooms (Mayfield, 2012). Gay's model encompassed six characteristics of culturally responsive teaching: validating, comprehensive, multidimensional, empowering, transformative and emancipatory (Gay, 2000). Each of these characteristics, if fully developed, could provide students who are culturally diverse with the confidence to make political and social change, and challenge inequitable systems (Gay, 2000). Students who experience culturally diverse instruction build confidence, and learn to value cultural diversity (Mayfield, 2012).

Authors of studies that have focused on observing teacher-student interactions have found that effective teaching can be successfully determined using observation procedures and tools (Bill & Melinda Gates, 2010a, 2010b, 2013). Other studies have provided evidence that culturally responsive teaching has positive impacts on student engagement and achievement (Averil, Anderson, & Drake, 2015, Mayfield, 2012, Gorham, 2013; King, 2014). Culturally responsive teaching research has focused on the development of cultural responsiveness and the benefit of cultural responsive teaching in diverse schools (Siwatu, 2011).

A school can have multicultural education simply by diversifying the ethnicities and cultures that are incorporated into the curriculum and classroom environment illustrating an equal respect for backgrounds and experiences of all students (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995). However, the school that is culturally responsive utilizes the cultures of the students in the school building as catalysts for learning (Gay, 2000). The difference between multicultural and culturally responsive education has to be made (Rychly & Graves, 2012). The content in a multicultural classroom does not have to contain the cultures of the students in that particular classroom (Rychly & Graves, 2012). Contrarily, culturally responsive content must respond to the cultures of the students in the room (Rychly & Graves, 2012).

Summary

Historically, changes to what is considered effective teaching have been based on societal events or research reports and studies that have been conducted. Some of the major changes to the discussions of effective teaching and observations of teaching have occurred after the launch of Sputnik in the 1960's and the report findings of *A Nation at Risk* in the 1980's. Observations of effective teacher-student interactions have had many focuses including classroom management, instructional and emotional support. The latest shift in how effective teaching indicators are determined resulted from studies such as the MET (Bill and Melinda Gates, 2012, 2013) and research based on the findings of Marzano and Toth. Researchers such as Marzano and Toth (2014) determined that effective teaching can be observed. This is supported by the increase in popularity of studies using observations of teacher-student interactions as a method of determining the experiences of students in the classroom.

Gay's (2000) research on culturally responsive teaching yielded six characteristics of culturally responsive teaching: validating, comprehensive, multidimensional, empowering, transformative, emancipatory. Culturally responsive educators support students using a variety of methods including engaging students in differentiated, focused and rigorous learning experiences, while building students' confidence and abilities to actively advocate for themselves and their communities. Culturally responsive educators understand the value of the experiences and knowledge students enter into the classroom already possessing and educators have the growth mindset to celebrate and cultivate those cultural perspectives to enhance academic achievement for students. The literature review of the present study included research over observations of effective teaching and culturally responsive teaching. The present study focus on observation of effective teaching will address the need to determine what the teacher-student interactions are in culturally diverse, low achieving classrooms and if those interactions are reflective of culturally responsive teaching.

Chapter 3 summarizes the research design, selection of participants, measurement, data collection procedures, data analysis and synthesis, researcher's role, limitations, and summary. Following the detailed explanation of the research process and methodology is chapter 4. The study findings and analysis of data are included in chapter 5.

Chapter 3

Methods

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the use of culturally responsive teaching in culturally diverse, low-achieving elementary school classrooms in the Midwest. A second purpose was to determine the alignment of observation data of teacher-student interactions with Gay's culturally responsive teaching model.

Philosophical beliefs about qualitative research that impacted how the present study was developed are presented in Chapter 3. Additionally, Chapter 3 includes the research design, selection of participants, measurement, data collection procedures, data analysis and synthesis, researcher's role, limitations, and summary.

Research Design

A qualitative phenomenological research design methodology was used in this study (Creswell, 2014). Yin (2011) discussed five characteristics of qualitative research that distinguishes it from other forms of research related to the social sciences.

1. Studying the meaning of people's lives, under real-world conditions;
2. Representing the views and perspectives of the people in a study;
3. Covering the contextual conditions within which people live;
4. Contributing insights into existing or emerging concepts that may help to explain human social behavior; and
5. Striving to use multiple sources of evidence rather than relying on a single source alone. (pp. 7-8)

The five characteristics of qualitative research helped to guide the research process. The research design promoted study of the lived experiences of teachers and

students. Two perspectives were represented in the present study. The first perspective was from the lens of the researcher. As both the researcher and instructional coach, the perspective in which the archival data were analyzed was for the purpose of illuminating the experiences of teachers and students in culturally diverse, elementary school classrooms. The second perspective was based on the actions of the teachers. The archival direct observation data made it possible to glean an understanding of the context in which culturally diverse students learned and teachers taught.

Based on the problem and purposes of the study, as well as the research questions, the central phenomena of interest were teacher-student interactions in an urban culturally diverse urban elementary school. Following the suggestions of Creswell (2014), a qualitative methodology was appropriate because of the need to focus on a specific phenomenon based on the problem of the study within its natural environment. This study explored the lived experiences of teachers in kindergarten through 5th-grade classrooms with culturally diverse students; the focus on lived experiences was the main consideration when implementing a phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994). It was only through the lived experiences of teachers that an understanding of the phenomenon could be achieved. Being able to analyze data from the lived experiences of teachers and students was important to the purposes of the study.

Selection of Participants

The target population for this study was composed of in-service teachers of kindergarten through 5th grade students in low-achieving urban school districts in the Midwest of the US. District X had over 30 elementary schools. The elementary school from which data for this study was used was chosen because it had at least 89% of

students who were economically disadvantaged. The Hispanic and Black populations exceeded 65% of the schools' total population of students. Elementary School X teachers had similar demographics to the average of District X. District X had 90% of students who qualified for free and reduced lunch and the elementary school chosen for the current study had 89% of students qualify for free and reduced lunch. According to scholars, qualitative research samples are based on data saturation point, which may range from 6 to 20 participants (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Data for this study was from 22 of the 23 in-service general education teachers from the selected elementary school during the 2014-2015 school year.

Nonrandom purposive sampling was used for the current study. The basis for eligibility was the inclusion and exclusion criteria for the study. The inclusion criteria were: (a) fully certified in-service teacher, (b) teacher of kindergarten through 5th grade students, (c) must be teaching in low-achieving elementary school with culturally-diverse students (e.g., District X), (d) must have undergone training for teaching culturally-diverse students, and (e) must be teaching in District X during the 2014-2015 school year. The exclusion criteria included both: (a) discontinuance of training for handling students in a culturally diverse environment, and (b) in-service teachers of students beyond 5th grade. The current study included data from elementary in-service teachers because they have fewer students and spent more time per day with the students in their classrooms than other teachers at the secondary level of education. The Elementary School X teachers were not participants because the observation logs were obtained as archival data. The researcher had selection criteria because it was important to the present to

study to capture observation logs during the school year that culturally responsive teaching was a focus of teachers' professional development.

The archival data units were included from all teachers who were observed by the instructional coach for Elementary School X during the 2014-2015 school year. The archival data represented 22 teachers. The archival direct observation logs represented teachers only and did not include support personnel such as the reading interventionist or paraprofessionals.

Of the 45 observation logs, 29 detailed teacher-student interactions in kindergarten through fifth grade classrooms. The observations were conducted as a part of the professional development for teachers during the 2014-2015 school year. Because only four teachers per grade level taught in Elementary School X, information such as how many observations were included from each grade level and how many observations were included of each teacher were omitted to protect the identities of the teachers in Elementary School X. The present study looked at the observation logs holistically to determine themes based on Elementary School X as a whole.

Measurement

One method of instrumentation, the District X Observation Log, was used for this study. The observation log, as seen in Appendix A, was provided to instructional coaches working in District X. The observation log used in the current study was developed by the curriculum department for District X for instructional coaches to give feedback to teachers to change teacher practice. Identifiable information was removed from the observation logs to aid in the minimization of the effects of researcher bias and also to protect teacher and school privacy. The observation logs contained three

columns. The first column was used to record the date of the observation, as well as the coaching role the instructional coach served in while observing. The second column contained the instructional coach's notes that were written during observations. The third column was used to record questions, concerns, and wonderings (wonderings are topics that need additional clarity) the instructional coach planned to use while debriefing the observation with the teacher. These columns were included because the curriculum department for District X developed the observation log based on the coaching model discussed in books such as *Coaching Matters* by Killion, Harrison, and Bryan (2012), who reported that instructional coaches have clearly defined roles, which focus on improving and strengthening quality instruction and teaching practices for the purpose of improving student achievement. Instructional coaches are often seen as the catalyst for positive change within school buildings (Killion et al., 2012). Therefore, the observation log serves as data collection to determine what teacher instructional practices are and additionally, the observation log captures the thoughts, and ideas of the instructional coach for what may be concerns, celebrations, or next steps to move the teacher in a positive direction. The observation data used for the measurement in the present study included information from both the second and third columns. The use of direct observation was essential because of the need to determine the teacher-student interactions in the classroom environment. Observations of interactions took place at different times throughout the school day and different times throughout the 2014-2015 school year in various classrooms in order to determine what teacher-student interactions were in an urban culturally diverse elementary school and if those interactions were reflective of culturally responsive teaching characteristics.

At the conclusion of the 2014-2015 school year, data from the observations were not reviewed again, until it was time to deconstruct the data for the purposes of the current study, which occurred three years after the initial data had been collected. Information on the observation logs was then cataloged as detailed (Appendix A), with evidence of teacher-student interactions, or not detailed (Appendix B), information that was not robust enough or did not aid in the deconstruction of teacher-student interactions. Of the 45 observation logs, 16 were deemed not detailed by these criteria. A total of 29 observation logs, which represented 22 of the 23 teachers working in Elementary School X during the 2014-2015 school year, comprised the measurement for the study.

Trustworthiness and Credibility

Qualitative research does not employ terms such as validity and reliability. Qualitative research strives for trustworthiness and credibility. According to Yin (2011), there are three methods used to demonstrate a research study is both trustworthy and credible: transparency, methodic-ness, and adherence to evidence. Chapter 3 outlines all procedures used in the present study to meet the goal of being transparent and reveals all information necessary for others to review and understand the procedures. Because discovery of unpredictable conclusions is an expected part of qualitative research, the present study utilized an exploratory approach to the data analysis and synthesis process (Yin, 2011). However, there was a thoughtful and intentional process to the procedures used in the present study. This intentionality is what Yin (2011) referred to as methodic-ness. Lastly, the present study provided access to all the data that were collected and using a detailed descriptive narrative of how themes and the analysis of themes were derived. The purpose of presenting all evidence that was collected was to meet the

expectation of adherence to evidence as explained by Yin (2011). Yin (2011) stated, “A final objective is that qualitative research be based on an explicit set of evidence” (p. 20).

In addition to the three methods to determine trustworthiness and credibility Yin (2011) detailed, District X’s observation logs were credible data units because of the professional development provided to instructional coaches to ensure observation logs were completed in the manner intended by the district. Instructional coaches and administrators reviewed observation logs completed by all instructional coaches and compared their findings to determine how teachers were being observed, which provided an additional credibility method. Instructional coaches and administrators worked collaboratively on instructional leadership teams to ensure teachers received timely and applicable feedback based on the data from the observation logs. In Elementary School X, teachers were observed by both instructional coaches, making it necessary to compare the findings of each instructional coach to ensure alignment of professional development with coaching. As an instructional leadership team, the administrators and instructional coaches conducted observations of the same teachers at the same time and then calibrated their observations.

Data Collection Procedures

Based on Creswell’s (2014) explanation of qualitative research methods, the decision to deconstruct teacher-student interactions using archival direct observation data was determined to be a relevant data set for a qualitative study. The process of data collection for the archival direct observations was as follows:

1. An elementary school was chosen in District X that the researcher had access to through a professional connection. As the instructional coach for

Elementary School X, the researcher had a good relationship with the principals and teachers. The principal gave permission by email (see Appendix C) to utilize the school's direct observation data that were collected during the 2014-2015 school year. A total of 22 teachers were represented in the data out of the 23 teachers working in the school during the 2014-2015 school year.

2. The advisor for the present study submitted an Institutional Review Board proposal on March 8, 2017 (see Appendix D). Approval to conduct the study was received on April 19, 2017 (see Appendix E).
3. After permission was received from the principal to use the data in the current study, the Director of Research for District X was contacted and a Survey and Data Utilization Agreement was completed and approved (Appendix F).
4. Archival data were acquired from Elementary School X from the 2014-2015 school year. The data were kept in word documents on the researcher's district provided laptop.

Data Analysis and Synthesis

The analysis of phenomenological data involves disaggregating the direct observations obtained by the researcher and synthesizing themes to determine how the results of the observations could be interpreted (Creswell, 2009). The qualitative data analysis and synthesis for the current study was comprised of analysis for themes based on the 29 classroom observation logs, including the notes from the observations as well as the questions and wonderings that were included on the observation log. The data analysis and synthesis process included deconstructing teacher-student interactions,

determining themes based on teacher-student interactions, and lastly connecting the themes to Gay's culturally responsive teaching model.

For the initial deconstruction of the data from the observation logs, affinity diagramming, also known as thematic analysis, was used. Affinity diagramming can be defined as the organization of a large number of ideas into their natural relationships (Tague, 2004). Tague (2004) described the use of affinity diagramming with groups. However, the present study utilized this process of data analysis to ensure there was methodic-ness to the synthesis and analysis of the data. Four procedures were utilized while using the affinity diagramming process as summarized by Tague (2004): a) Record ideas on a sticky note, then put sticky notes on a large surface to ensure all notes are visible, b) Synthesize the information on the sticky notes to determine ideas that are related. Move the related notes to be side by side. Notes can be by themselves and also, notes that belong to more than one group can be duplicated, c) Once all groups are solid, create a heading for each group. Use a different color sticky note to summarize the group. If one of the notes in the group summarizes the thoughts, use this note as the summarizing note, and d) At this point, if applicable, create supergroups of the groups.

The next step in the deconstructing process was to determine, of the culturally responsive strategies previous research emphasized, which were found most prevalent in the data. The themes were then written as narratives organized by the research questions to illustrate detailed information about the observations and how teachers interacted with diverse low-achieving elementary students in the classroom. An example of a theme that might arise during this stage of the analysis is that teachers were less likely to use

strategies to support linguistic diversity. Finally, the last step in the analysis process was to connect the themes to Gay's Culturally Responsive Teaching Model.

The culturally responsive teaching model was developed by Gay (2000) to mitigate the effects of the cultural differences found in schools on diverse students and to prepare teachers to be culturally sensitive to the needs of diverse students (Gay, 2000; Sloan, 2008). Gay's model included six characteristics of culturally responsive teaching: validating, comprehensive, multidimensional, empowering, transformative, and emancipatory (Gay, 2000). The use of Gay's culturally responsive teaching model allowed the focus of the present study to be on the deconstruction of teacher-student interactions concentrating on themes that were representative of how teachers in a culturally diverse environment interacted with students and to determine if the teacher-student interactions were representative of indicators of effective teaching for culturally diverse students as outlined by Gay. The data analysis process, with the support of Gay's research, provided the culturally responsive emphasis necessary to address the need to focus on teacher-student interactions in culturally diverse classrooms. In order to adhere to the evidence and maintain objectivity, the evaluation of the data with regard to Gay's model was a completely separate step conducted after the synthesis of themes to allow the evidence to lead to discovery of both unexpected and expected findings.

An external qualitative research professional was asked to provide a third-party evaluation of the appropriateness of reported analysis processes. The evaluator offered the following observations:

In Chapter Three, I think she did a good job explaining the processes she took to analyze her qualitative data and writing it up. I think her methodology was

appropriate and rigorous. She included enough information on how she validated the data analysis procedures and how she analyzed the data. Finally, her chapter four followed acceptable qualitative procedures, it is clear how the themes emerged. There is strong evidence that her analysis procedures were appropriate (Qualitative Research Professional, personal communication, October 27, 2017).

Limitations

Although teachers were told that professional development was required, it is possible that teachers did not attend all sessions. Although every effort was made to control for researcher bias, there is always the possibility that the researcher's background could have introduced bias during the time the researcher acting as an instructional coach was collecting the data and when the researcher collected and analyzed the archival data. Additionally, observations lasted between 15-30 minutes per District X mandate. Instructional coaches were not evaluative, and any observation lasting longer than 30 minutes would have been seen as evaluative. Further explanation of the role of the instructional coach is included in Appendix G.

Researcher's Role

I was the instructional coach for Elementary School X during the 2014-2015 school year. This role may have influenced how I approached the research study because I had knowledge of how teachers and students interacted in the classroom. For transparency a description of the role of an instructional coach for Elementary School X is included in Appendix G. As the researcher, controlling for bias was an important aspect of the research process. To address potential bias, observation logs that were not

detailed were not used to minimize subjectivity. The affinity diagramming process was used to ensure that the deconstruction of the observation logs was consistent.

Additionally, as an instructional coach, I was responsible for creating and facilitating the professional development for Elementary School X that focused on Gay's model of culturally responsive teaching. Having knowledge of how teachers interacted with students in the classroom allowed me to tailor professional development to what I believed the needs of the teachers were. I used my knowledge of culturally responsive teaching and the book selected by the principal of Elementary School X to provide teachers with opportunities during professional development to enhance their understanding of how to engage with culturally diverse students in the classroom.

Training for School District X occurred during early release Wednesday afternoons. Students were released two hours early, so teachers could attend required professional development sessions. Some sessions were developed and facilitated by district-selected coaches and some sessions were developed and facilitated by individual school buildings. As an instructional coach, I was responsible for creating and facilitating a once a month professional development for teachers in Elementary School X that focused on Gay's model of culturally responsive teaching. During the two-hour sessions, teachers engaged in activities that focused on the book, *How to Teach Students Who Don't Look Like You* (Davis, 2012), and reflected on teacher and student actions in the classrooms. During the 2014-2015 school year as the instructional coach, I used knowledge of what was happening in classrooms to adjust the professional development to fit the needs of the school building. As becoming a culturally competent educator is a long and arduous journey, during the 2014-2015 school year, the primary focus was for

teachers to develop a clear sense of their own cultures, and gain an understanding of how they could learn about their students' cultures to begin utilizing their knowledge of who their students were culturally to inform the way they implemented curriculum and instruction. Teachers were asked to read sections of the Davis (2012) book outside of the designated professional development time, but teachers were also given some time during professional development to reread and refresh their memory of pertinent sections of the book.

As the researcher, an additional role involved removing identifiable information from the archival data to keep the confidentiality of the teachers used in the current study, as well as the confidentiality of the school district used. The removal of identifiable information also minimized potential risk to the district and the teachers. In a study so intertwined with culture, it would be negligent not to acknowledge the potential bias of the researcher. Through reflective practices common to educators, several biases were uncovered that if not addressed, could have impacted the current study. The potential for bias was addressed throughout the study using researcher reflexivity. This technique means that the researcher reported on belief systems that have been engrained through cultural and experiential experiences (Creswell, 2000). It was used to add an additional layer of protection against how bias may impact the study. The process of researcher reflexivity has been used by researchers to be transparent about the biases, thought processes, beliefs and systems of perspectives they entered into the study holding (Creswell, 2000). Careful consideration has been taken to ensure the results accurately and authentically represent the population of the study.

Additionally, because the topic of the current study is of personal and professional interest, it was imperative to make sure there was enough evidence from the data whenever a theme was identified from the archival data. Some of the areas for potential bias included personal work and life experiences, as well as educational background. I was a student in K-12 culturally diverse schools, and a student at a historically black college/university. Additionally, another source of potential bias is my mother who was a teacher in culturally diverse schools for more than 30 years.

Lastly, another source of potential bias was having a professional career in culturally diverse education. I have acknowledged that I have previous knowledge of culturally responsive teaching through self-directed research, as well as my experiences as an adjunct instructor for a university in the education department teaching courses to preservice teachers over culturally responsive teaching. I evaluated continuously the process for data analysis to mitigate effects of the potential bias and ensure that research findings and conclusions were representative of the unbiased data collection process. My potential for bias is based on my first-hand knowledge of how teachers interacted with students with different cultural backgrounds than their own. I acknowledge my bias that teachers in District X did not utilize culturally responsive strategies with fidelity. Due to my knowledge, recognition and continued written reflection about my bias, I was able to monitor the process of data analysis closely and minimize potential influences of personal bias to the outcome of the study (see Appendix H), the Researcher Bias Journal.

Summary

The research design for the current study was a qualitative phenomenology with the use of archival observational data. To analyze data, affinity diagramming was

conducted and several processes were used to obtain validity. As both the researcher, and the instructional coach who originally collected the data, a continuous process of reflection was used to mitigate any affects of bias on the research outcomes. In chapter 4, the results of the deconstruction and the themes that emerged are presented. After the themes are compared to Gay's model, the results are reported in chapter 4.

Chapter 4

Results

Studies conducted by researchers such as Hamre and Pianta (2013) and the researchers who contributed to the determination of effective teaching, such as Kane et al. (2013), expressed a need to more clearly define components of teaching that produce outcomes, such as student achievement and social development. The findings of the present study are based on observation logs that were deconstructed to determine if teachers were using components of teaching that produce outcomes. An additional layer of concern propelled the need to determine if culturally responsive components of teaching were evident in culturally diverse, low-achieving elementary classrooms.

The two purposes of the present study were to deconstruct the teacher-student interactions in culturally diverse, low-achieving elementary school classrooms and to determine alignment of those teacher-student interactions to Gay's culturally responsive teaching model. The research questions provided the overarching organization of the study. The first step was to deconstruct the archival data from the observation logs. Then, the next step was to determine what themes emerged from the deconstruction process, concluding the data analysis process by determining if the themes that emerged based on the deconstruction of data were reflective of Gay's model.

An exploratory analysis of the data used in the present study involved deconstructing the archival direct observation logs by using the process of affinity diagramming. From the affinity diagramming process, natural relationships formed and five themes were deduced. "A priori themes come from the characteristics of the phenomenon being studied; from already agreed on professional definitions found in

literature reviews; from local, commonsense constructs; and from researchers' values, theoretical orientations, and personal experiences" (Ryan & Bernard, 2003, p. 88). The theme development process used for the current study involved three parts: analysis of words to look for repeated words and phrases, looking for patterns based on the literature review, and looking for patterns based on professional knowledge of teacher-student interactions in a culturally diverse urban elementary school environment.

The five themes that emerged from the deconstructing of teacher-student interactions in culturally diverse, urban, elementary classrooms were as follows.

1. Differentiation was not observed as a strategy during teacher-student interactions in Elementary School X.
2. Language development of linguistically diverse students was achieved through cooperative learning opportunities.
3. Students in Elementary School X had low levels of engagement with their learning.
4. Instruction in Elementary School X was not rigorous.
5. Lessons in Elementary School X were not focused.

The theme that was reflective of Gay's model was that language development of linguistically diverse students was achieved through cooperative learning opportunities. The theme incorporated validating, multidimensional, empowering, and transformative culturally responsive teaching characteristics according to Gay's explanation of these terms. The exploratory approach to the deconstructing of archival direct observation data provided the foundation for the synthesis of themes. Through the analysis of observation logs, the present study sought to give insight into the experiences of urban elementary

school teachers and culturally diverse students. The deconstruction process and the results are summarized next.

Six-Step Deconstructing Process

The deconstructing process included six steps. Each step was determined based on the purposes of the study and the goal of addressing the research questions. Chapter 4 is organized by the six steps in the deconstructing process as outlined in Figure 1. Following Figure 1, each step in the deconstructing process is described in detail

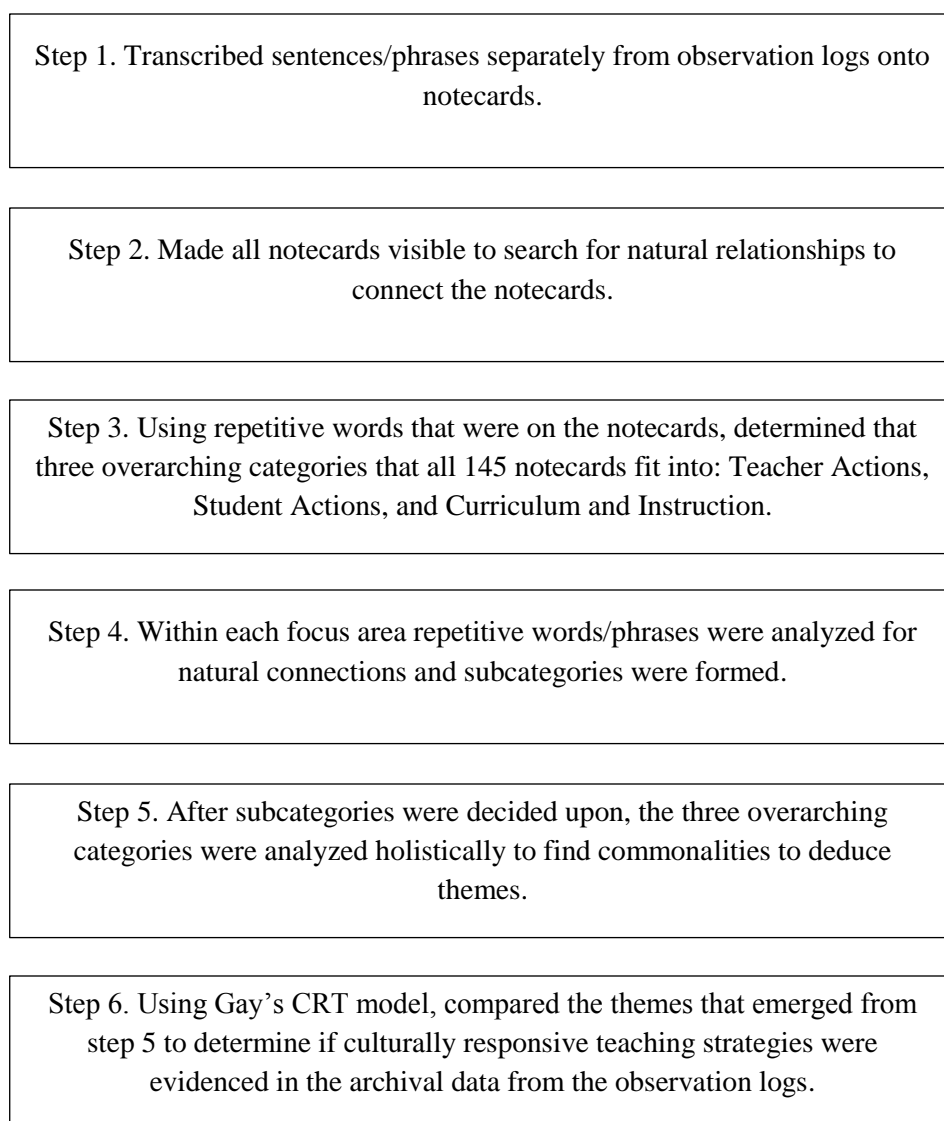


Figure 1. The six-step process used to deconstruct direct observation data.

Step 1. In order to begin the deconstructing process, the observation logs were transcribed onto notecards. All information from the observation logs was used including sentences/phrases from both columns on the observation log. Tague (2014) reported the use of sticky notes for the affinity diagramming process to be able to shift and move the data around to form groups and also sticky notes are used to be able to see all of the data at the same time. Notecards were used to achieve the same goal of easy maneuvering of

the data in this study. The purpose of the notecards was to prepare for the affinity-diagramming phase just as Tague's sticky notes were used. Each sentence/phrase from the 29 observation logs was written onto a separate notecard in preparation to complete step two. The 29 observation logs were transcribed into 145 notecards total. An example of a sentence on a notecard is, "Students are listening to the teacher read a story."

Step 2. After all sentences/phrases from the observation logs had been transcribed onto notecards, the notecards were disseminated so all notecards were visible at the same time. Determining natural relationships between the notecards, or patterns, was the next step (Tague, 2004).

Step 3. Reorganizing the notecards using words that were repeated on multiple notecards led to the conclusion that all of the cards fit into one of three categories. The patterns that were the most obvious included repetition of the phrases, "teacher is," and "students are." Based on these repetitive phrases, the notecards were organized into three categories: teacher actions, student actions, and other.

Teacher Actions. The first category was titled, Teacher Actions. Of the 40 notecards in the Teacher Actions category, 22 started with the words, "Teacher is." Four notecards started with, "Teacher read." Nine notecards contained variations of phrases/sentences that indicated teacher actions. They are listed below.

- Teacher made
- Teacher wrote
- Teacher did
- Teacher referred
- Teacher pulled

- Teacher gave
- Teacher brainstormed
- Teacher modeled
- Teacher connects

Five cards remaining had been organized into the Teacher Actions category, but were worded differently than the previously discussed cards. Table 2 includes the way the cards were written based on the observation notes, and also includes the words used to translate the cards into teacher actions. Table 2 illustrates why the remaining five cards were included in the Teacher Actions category instead of Student Actions or the third category, Other. Even though the cards were worded differently, the actions on the cards were easily translated into teacher actions. Because the cards were easily reworded to more clearly describe teacher actions, they were included in the teacher actions category.

Table 2

Explanation of Five Remaining Teacher Actions Notecards

Phrases/Sentences from Notecards	Translated Teacher Actions
Students are listening to the teacher read.	Teacher is reading.
I really like how you use student sticks to ensure all students are held accountable.	Teacher used names written on sticks to hold all students accountable.
After students and the teacher shared the teacher wrote the first sentence on the board for students to copy. Then the teacher told them what to write next.	Teacher wrote the first sentence on the board and then the teacher told students what to write next.
Students are listening to the Three Little Pigs.	Teacher is reading the Three Little Pigs.
Students are copying a sentence that the teacher wrote.	Teacher wrote a sentence for students to copy.

Student Actions. The second category was titled, Student Actions and included 53 notecards. Of the 53 notecards, 23 began with, “Students are.” Two cards started with, “Students discussed.” Two cards started with, “Students turned and talked.” Two cards started with, “Students did.” Three cards started with, “Students shared.” Two cards started with, “Students and teacher.” Eight cards described other student actions and are listed below.

- Students brainstormed
- Students chose
- Students have
- Students used

- Students did
- Students read
- Students used
- Students partnered

Eleven cards required more processing to determine they belonged in the Student Actions category because they were worded in a way that was initially difficult to interpret. Upon further investigation, the cards were determined to be describing student actions. Those cards are included in Table 3, which illustrates how the remaining 11 cards were translated from what was written in the observation logs to more clearly detail student actions. Table 3 explains why the eleven notecards were included in the student actions category. Even though the cards were worded differently, the actions on the cards were easily translated into student actions.

Table 3

Explanation of Eleven Remaining Student Actions Cards

Phrases/Sentences from Notecards	Teacher Actions
Gave time to get the wiggles out and put listening ears on.	Students are getting the wiggles out and putting their listening ears on.
You would be able to monitor who is talking and if it is appropriate.	Students are not talking appropriately.
I wonder if you assigned partners A and B, if you could ensure all students participated.	All students are not participating.
Spoke to some students. Engagement is low.	Student engagement is low.
I wonder if you tell students that you are going to stop and then they will be able to be more focused.	Students are not focused.
Had students make predictions.	Students made predictions.
What do you do for students who do not follow instructions while working independently.	Students are not following directions.
Having students make predictions	Students made predictions.
How are you monitoring the room to let students know that they are to be working while you work with your small group.	Students are not working while the teacher is working with a small group.
Students started getting distracted because they already know how to use transition words.	Students are distracted because they already know how to use transition words.
Teacher is having students use talking stems to make predictions.	Students are using talking stems to make predictions.

Other. The remaining 52 cards that did not fit in the Teacher Actions or Student Actions categories were in a category of their own. The next process for step three was to determine natural relationships with the cards that did not fall into the Teacher Actions or Student Actions categories so that the category could be labeled, and the notecards could be deconstructed further to ultimately determine themes.

It was decided that the remaining category comprised recurring comments about the curriculum and instruction. For example, the cards that fell into this third category included words such as lesson, standard, and instruction; and the notecards also commented on instructional techniques, such as anchor charts, modeling, and focusing the lesson using an objective or target.

Through the process of searching for natural relationships utilizing the researcher's previous knowledge of educational practices, as well as the research review, the third category that arose from Step 3 was eventually titled Curriculum and Instruction. For the third overarching category, it was important to find relationships between notecards, as the notecards that fell into this third category were not as definitive as to what was being described as the cards that were in the Teacher Actions and Student Actions categories.

The two categories, Teacher Actions and Student Actions, provided the first layer of deconstruction. As the affinity diagramming process continued, additional connections were made between the notecards, which ultimately lead to the development of subcategories, and then themes. In Step 4, the Teacher Actions notecards were analyzed for natural relationships. In order to determine how notecards could be grouped, the researcher utilized the process of determining a priori themes.

Step 4. A priori themes were developed from agreed upon definitions from previous research, as well as researchers' values and experiences (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Ryan and Bernard's explanation of a priori themes provided the basis for how the present study determined themes. Prior to step 4, the 145 notecards were organized into natural relationships as specified in step 2. In step 3, the notecards were organized into categories. The focus of step 4 was to determine appropriate subcategories to further organize the data using the lens of the researcher. The lens of the researcher included two frames of reference. The first frame used to evaluate the notecards for natural relationships was the researcher's previous knowledge of educational practices, such as strategies effective teachers use to provide students with engaging and meaningful learning experiences. Secondly, the literature review provided a frame of reference for the deconstruction of the notecards that allowed the researcher to discover natural relationships, or ways the notecards connected.

Due to the need to further analyze the notecards that were originally organized into the Other category, step 4 started with the Other category that was renamed through the process of step 4 and eventually became Curriculum and Instruction. Teacher Actions and Student Actions had obvious connections based on the repetitive phrases, which included, "teacher is" and "students are." Until relationships could be determined based on the cards that were left out of these two categories, the process of deconstruction could not progress. Therefore, it was important to determine how the cards in the Other category connected to each other first before proceeding with the deconstruction of the Teacher Actions and Student Actions categories. It was determined

that the cards in the Other category, or Curriculum and Instruction category, did connect and not additional categories were necessary.

After determining the natural relationships to group the notecards in the Curriculum and Instruction category, five subcategories emerged: differentiation, linguistic diversity, student engagement, rigor, and focusing lessons. After going through the same process of looking for natural relationships and grouping the notecards organized into the Teacher Actions and Student Actions categories, the same five subcategories emerged and were used to organize the cards in the Teacher Actions and Student Actions categories as well. The process of exploring the relationships that naturally connected the notecards provided the foundation for determining themes

Table 4 details the number of notecards from each of the categories, Curriculum and Instruction, Teacher Actions, and Student Actions that were organized into each of the five subcategories: differentiation, linguistic diversity, student engagement, rigor, and focusing the lesson. The process used to organize the notecards into the subcategories is detailed next.

Table 4

Number of Notecards Organized into each Subcategory by Category

Sub-Category	Category		
	Curriculum & Instruction	Teacher Actions	Student Actions
Differentiation	6	20	12
Linguistic Diversity	19	8	15
Student Engagement	6	2	14
Rigor	5	6	12
Focusing the Lesson	16	2	0

Differentiating. Table I1 (see Appendix I1) presented each of the five subcategories for Curriculum and Instruction, with the exact sentences/phrases from the notecards that were organized into each subcategory. The first subcategory that emerged based on the search for natural relationships within the Curriculum and Instruction category was differentiation. “In all classrooms, teachers deal with at least three curricular elements: (1) content—input, what students learn; (2) process—how students go about making sense of ideas and information; and (3) product—output, or how students demonstrate what they have learned” (Tomlinson, 2013, p. 7). Teachers can use content, process, and product to offer students a variety of ways to learn, and demonstrate their learning. This method of instruction is referred to as differentiation (Tomlinson, 2013). Some examples of the notecards that were organized into the differentiation subcategory are summarized below:

- I noticed some writers already knew how to use transition words.
- Need to give students choice with parameters.
- High students are just sitting.
- I wonder how you can differentiate because you have some very high students that are just sitting.

The above referenced notecards were interpreted, based on the researcher’s previous knowledge of differentiation and previous research that has focused on differentiation, to provide examples of teacher-student interactions that indicated students were engaged in activities that were not varied to meet their diverse needs. The notecards that stated advanced students were just sitting, or that students already knew how to use

transition words, indicated that teachers were teaching content that students already understood. These notecards indicated that students were not getting their needs met.

Table I2 (see Appendix I2) outlined each of the five subcategories for Teacher Actions, with the exact sentences/phrases from the notecards that were organized into each subcategory. Based on what has been detailed in previous research regarding differentiation, the notecards in the Teacher Action category contained words and phrases indicative of students being involved in whole class activities. The Teacher Actions notecards in the differentiation subcategory also indicated that activities were focused on the teacher doing the thinking. Some examples of the notecards organized into the differentiation subcategory for Teacher Actions are provided below.

- Teacher is reading a story.
- Teacher is telling students about MLK.
- Teacher is comparing and contrasting.
- Teacher made a list.

Table I3 (see Appendix I3) outlines each of the five subcategories for Student Actions, with the exact sentences/phrases from the notecards that were organized into each subcategory. The notecards organized into the differentiation subcategory for the Student Actions category evidenced several activities which involved students working together. However, notecards indicated that students did not have opportunities to have a choice in the way they learned or how they demonstrated their learning. Additionally, the notecards indicated that students were involved in very little independent work. The Student Actions notecards, similarly to the Teacher Actions notecards, illustrated students having whole class activities. Some examples of the notecards from the Student Actions

category are below.

- Students are brainstorming ideas for the title of a story together.
- Students discussed setting.
- Students and teacher answered the question, should Clover be friends with Annie?
- Students and teacher filled in a graphic organizer.
- Students brainstormed together ideas for character names.

Linguistic Diversity. The next subcategory that emerged from the analysis of natural relationships within the Curriculum and Instruction category was linguistic diversity. Linguistic diversity, as defined in the present study, refers to the variance of languages found in urban, public elementary classrooms. During the deconstruction of Curriculum and Instruction notecards that eventually were organized into the linguistic diversity subcategory, patterns of how students were producing language, and how teachers were scaffolding language for students were apparent. The delete notecards summarized are examples.

- Great way to practice turn and talk
- I wonder how this lesson would have been different if you used an anchor chart.
- I wonder how using talking stems would support oral language and writing.
- Good use of prior anchor chart.
- What language supports have you used to better support linguistically diverse students?

The notecards organized into the linguistic diversity subcategory were evidence of

the use of visuals to support language development such as anchor charts, but also there was evidence that language development was not being supported. With there being evidence of support of language development and also there were opportunities language development could have been supported, but was not, a conclusion about language development of linguistically diverse students could not be made after the analysis of only the notecards in the Curriculum and Instruction category. Further analysis of additional notecards in the other categories was necessary.

The notecards that emerged from the deconstructing of the Teacher Actions category were representative of students building language through peer interactions and shared experiences with the teacher during whole class activities. Teachers utilized resources such as word walls and anchor charts to build language of linguistically diverse students. Some of the instructional strategies teachers used to scaffold language for students included modeling, shared writing, and shared reading. Some of the notecards that were organized in the linguistic diversity subcategory for Teacher Actions are provided below.

- Teacher modeled how to edit a text.
- Teacher wrote a model text about what she did over winter break.
- Teacher is doing a shared writing of a sentence that models the kinds of sentences students have to write.
- Teacher referred to a poster for vocabulary words.
- Teacher did an interactive writing.

The notecards from the Student Actions category that were grouped into the linguistic diversity subcategory illustrated how students worked together with their

classmates and their teachers to produce writing and practice reading. Students utilized language support resources such as sentence starters and word walls to enhance their writing. Below are examples of notecards that fit naturally within the linguistic diversity subcategory for Student Actions.

- Students are doing a shared reading of morning message.
- Students are helping teacher sound out words.
- Students are adding words to their word walls.
- Students are to use the sentence starter and complete the sentence.
- Students are supposed to use word walls and list teacher made to find words.

Student Engagement. The fourth subcategory that emerged during the deconstruction of Curriculum and Instruction notecards was student engagement. The questions, and wonderings from the Curriculum and Instruction category illustrated concerns that all students did not participate, students' behavior was not appropriate, and there were two notecards that indicated students were engaged in activities that were interesting to them. Examples of these notecards are detailed below.

- I wonder how you could make your lesson go faster.
- How could you have students reflect on what they could do better?
- Book connected to students' lives.
- Engaging text for students.
- I wonder how you can ensure that all students have to talk.

Two notecards from the Teacher Actions category were grouped into the student engagement subcategory. This aligns with what is known about student engagement and if students are or are not engaged. Student actions would be more reflective of this

characteristic of a classroom than teacher actions. The two notecards from Teacher Actions illustrated teachers being involved in activities to aid in ensuring students were engaged. These notecards are listed below.

- Teacher is going around the room talking to students.
- Teacher is conferring with students.

The notecards from the Student Actions category were reflective of students being engaged in activities that were cooperative, but when students worked independently, they were off task. Additionally, there were questions about how teachers could better monitor students to ensure students were engaged in the lesson. Students were also interacting with each other to share their writing.

- Students are sharing their writing.
- Spoke to some students. Engagement is low.
- I wonder if you tell students that you are going to stop and then they will be able to be more focused.
- What do you do for students who do not follow instruction while working independently?
- How are you monitoring the room to let students know they are to be working?

Rigor. The fifth and final subcategory that emerged from the Curriculum and Instruction category deconstruction was rigor. Rigor is the amount of cognitive ability required to complete a task. Lessons with high levels of rigor require students to think critically and communicate complex processes to solve problems. The notecards in the Curriculum and Instruction category indicated that lessons lacked meaning for students.

Lessons were not reflective of high levels of comprehension. Some examples of the notecards follow.

- I wonder if students wanted to write the same sentences as you.
- Is there a way to accomplish this that would be more meaningful to students?
- I wonder if moving students through the writing process will students develop better independent writing skills.
- I wonder if we had sentence stems for students and modeled for students before they started writing allowed them to brainstorm and prewrite would journals reflect comprehension at higher levels

The Teacher Actions category contained notecards that evidenced teachers facilitating activities that required very little student thinking. This was because teachers were either doing the thinking, or students were merely copying what the teacher wrote. Also, there were notecards that indicated that teachers did not allow students to work independently of teacher support. Listed below are examples.

- Teacher pulled a small group to help them write a sentence.
- Teacher is guiding students sentence by sentence.
- Students are copying a sentence the teacher wrote.
- Teacher is dictating a sentence to students.

The Student Actions category provided examples of students working independently. Students also were involved in some higher-level thinking activities such as comparing and contrasting and making predictions. However, students were never seen working at the highest levels of cognitive complexity such as experimenting, making judgments or analyzing. Some examples of the Student Actions notecards are

included below.

- Having students make predictions
- Students read silently to themselves
- Students are recopying the paragraph
- Students are comparing and contrasting
- Students are writing independently

The process of exploring the relationships that naturally connected the notecards provided the foundation for determining themes, which was to answer the question, “What themes emerged from the deconstructing of teacher-student interactions in an urban culturally diverse elementary school?” During step 5, natural relationships between cards continued to be the focus as themes started to emerge from the analysis of the words and phrases on the notecards concludes.

Focusing the Lesson. The third subcategory was focusing the lesson. Notecards were organized into this subcategory because they included information about the purpose of the lesson, if the lesson instructions and objectives were clear, posted, or referenced. Focusing the lesson was the subcategory that developed from the researcher’s previous experience as a teacher. Lesson planning requires teachers to determine what the purpose of the lesson is going to be and what students should learn based on standards. The notecards below are examples of the notecards that were included into the focusing the lesson subcategory from the Curriculum and Instruction category.

- I’m a little confused about the instructions.
- Where do you post the lesson target?

- How do students know what they are supposed to learn?
- I'm wondering what the purpose of the lesson was.
- Objectives posted and read to students.

The notecards from the Curriculum and Instruction category made it clear that there was confusion regarding what students were supposed to learn and what students were supposed to do. Objectives or targets for the lesson were often not posted and not referred to during the lesson. There was no clear indication of how students were supposed to know what they were learning.

In the Teacher Actions category, the two notecards that were organized into the focusing the lesson subcategory indicated that teachers did make connections and help students understand what they were supposed to learn. There were only two notecards out of 18 that provided evidence of teachers being intentional about what they were teaching. The two notecards are listed below.

- Teacher gave students guiding questions
- Teacher connects morning message to the lesson about comparing and contrasting

There were no notecards organized into the focusing the lesson subcategory for Student Actions. The notecards for Student Actions never referenced students discussing, writing, or sharing about the purpose of the lesson, the lesson target or the lesson objective. Students did not interact with the teacher in ways that would have indicated students helped to focus the learning of a lesson.

Step 5. Due to the exploratory approach of the deconstructing of archival data, the process of determining themes changed mid-analysis. Initially, it was determined that

there would be themes for each of the three categories: teacher actions, student actions, and curriculum and instruction. However, after further analysis and the application of the same five subcategories to the three categories, it was determined that the three categories had commonalities. Due to the similarities found across all three categories, the themes of the three categories were repetitive. Ultimately, it was decided that the data analysis would be stronger if the notecards of observation data in the three categories were viewed holistically to determine overall themes for the entire research study.

As explained previously, a priori themes evolved based on agreed upon definitions from previous research, as well as researchers' values and professional experiences. When the first two parts of the three-part process to develop themes had been completed, the last part was to draw conclusions based on the combination of phrases/sentences organized into the subcategories to deduce the themes.

These conclusions were the themes that emerged from the deconstructing of teacher-student interactions in culturally diverse urban elementary classrooms. From the five subcategories, five themes emerged.

1. Elementary School X classrooms were not differentiated and they were teacher-centered.
2. Language development of linguistically diverse students was achieved cooperatively between teachers and students and students with other students.
3. Lessons in Elementary School X were not focused.
4. Students in Elementary School X had low levels of engagement with their learning.
5. Instruction in Elementary School X was not rigorous.

Differentiating. Of the 145 notecards for the study, 38 were organized into the Differentiation subcategory: 6 from Curriculum and Instruction, 20 from Teacher Actions, and 12 from Student Actions as illustrated in Table 4. Differentiation has been defined as providing diverse learners with different avenues of learning (Tomlinson, 2001). In other words, in differentiated classrooms, students have choice in how and what they learn, and how they demonstrate their understanding. In order to ensure validity of the research findings, notecards that illuminated teacher-student interactions that were representative of Tomlinson's definition of differentiation were a focus. However, of the 38 notecards, from all three categories that were organized into the differentiation subcategory, only one, teacher brainstormed ideas for differentiated learning centers, indicated an opportunity for teachers and students to engage in differentiated experiences.

The teacher was seen preparing for differentiated centers, and the hope was that those centers were eventually implemented, however, the data from the observation logs showed no evidence of students engaged in differentiated learning centers. The remaining 37 notecards as seen in Tables I1, I2, and I3, described whole class experiences, or students participating in the same activities through cooperative learning. Some examples from the Student Actions category included:

- Students and teacher filled in a graphic organizer
- Students are giving examples from the text to make a snowman.
- Students and teacher answered the question, "Should Clover be friends with Annie?"

Additionally, there were notecards that specifically inquired about why students were learning about concepts they obviously already understood as seen in the examples listed below from the Curriculum and Instruction category.

- I wonder how you can differentiate because you have some very high students that are just sitting.
- High students are just sitting
- I noticed some writers already knew how to use transition words.

To further explain the lack of differentiated activities, another conclusion was drawn. The majority of the notecards organized into the differentiation subcategory were from the Teacher Actions category. This indicated that in the classrooms in Elementary School X, teachers controlled a lot of the activities. All 20 of the notecards included in the subcategory of differentiation from the Teacher Actions category were demonstrative of teachers engaging in activities that were focused on what the teacher was thinking, doing, or saying. This conclusion was drawn first by the definition of teacher-centered classrooms as determined in previous research and secondly, the experiences of the researcher in educational settings. Teacher-centered activities were operationally defined as teachers delivering instruction with the purpose of transferring knowledge to students (Turner, 2010). The observations demonstrated how teachers were more likely to be the possessors of knowledge and students were the recipients. This method of interacting with students puts the emphasis on teachers demonstrating knowledge instead of students demonstrating and building knowledge. Ten out of the 20 cards for the Differentiation subcategory described teachers reading various texts to students. The remaining ten notecards are listed below.

1. Teacher brainstormed ideas for differentiated learning centers
2. Teacher is making a list of what is needed to make a snowman
3. Teacher is telling students about MLK
4. Teacher is making a list to record what students say
5. Teacher is sharing her thinking
6. Teacher is comparing and contrasting
7. Teacher is asking students “Who is the same age as the character?”
8. Teacher is reviewing with students the books they’ve read.
9. Teacher is thinking aloud
10. Teacher made a list of characters and setting

Each of the above statements details how the teacher shared his/her thinking with students. None of the notecards for the differentiation subcategory from the Teacher Actions, Student Actions, or the Curriculum and Instruction categories indicated that teachers helped or facilitated the critical thinking of students in ways that were appropriately challenging for each student’s skill level. All 20 notecards from Teacher Actions described, in various ways, how teachers processed, synthesized, and explained the thinking in the classroom. When teachers were comparing and contrasting, making a list, sharing their thinking, teachers were the possessors of information. Based on Turner’s (2010) definition of teacher-centered, all of the actions detailed on the notecards indicated how teachers were trying to transfer their knowledge to students. The one notecard in this subcategory that would have indicated a student-centered action by a teacher was the notecard that stated the teacher asked students a question. However, even with the teacher asking the questions, it implied that the teacher knew what information

was most important for students to understand about the text, again, putting the emphasis on the teacher as the possessor of knowledge. In a student-centered classroom, students would be asking questions of each other, doing the comparing and contrasting, and making the lists to process the information. Ultimately, the theme that emerged was that Elementary School X classrooms were not differentiated, and they were teacher-centered.

Linguistic Diversity. The next subcategory was Linguistic Diversity. Teacher Actions consisted of eight notecards under the Linguistic Diversity subcategory and Student Actions included 15. The Curriculum and Instruction category included 19 notecards organized into the Linguistic Diversity subcategory. This was a total of 42 of the 145 total notecards being included in the Linguistic Diversity subcategory.

The eight notecards from the Teacher Actions category organized into the linguistic diversity subcategory detailed how teachers handled language development in the classroom. One of the strategies used most often was modeling. Out of the eight notecards, four of the notecards showed the teacher modeling writing. Two of the eight notecards detailed teachers writing with their students. This was referred to as a shared or interactive writing. The last two notecards showed how teachers used vocabulary words with visuals to support language development during whole group lessons. Even though these eight notecards indicated some form of language development being cultivated in the classroom, they were centered on the teacher owning the use of language and demonstrating mastery of the language.

Of the 53 Student Actions notecards, 15 indicated some form of language development for students. Students were observed engaging in turn and talk, a strategy used to promote oral language, two times. Students were engaged in shared reading and

writing opportunities five times, and students used strategies such as a word wall, sentence starters, and talking stems to build vocabulary development seven times.

The Curriculum and Instruction category contained 19 notecards organized into the Linguistic Diversity subcategory. Of the 19 notecards, only two which indicated language development for linguistically diverse students are listed below.

- Great way to practice turn and talk
- Good use of prior anchor chart

The remaining 17 notecards were forms of questions or wonderings about why strategies such as anchor charts, visuals used to support language, partner talk, and other general opportunities to support language growth of linguistically diverse students were not used. Due to there being a total of 25 of the 42 notecards organized into Linguistic Diversity representing some form of language development through the use of cooperative practice with partners, small groups, or whole class instruction, the conclusion was made that language development of linguistically diverse students was achieved through cooperative learning opportunities.

Student Engagement. The fourth subcategory was student engagement. There were 22 notecards out of 145 organized into the Student Engagement subcategory: six from Curriculum and Instruction, 2 from Teacher Actions, and 14 from Student Actions. Nine out of 22 notecards had evidence of concerns with student engagement. Some examples are listed below.

- I wonder if you assigned partners A & B if you could ensure all students participate
- Spoke to some students engagement is low

- I wonder if you tell students that you are going to stop and then they will be able to be more focused
- What do you do for students who do not follow instruction while working independently
- How are you monitoring the room to let students know that they are to be working on

The remaining 13 notecards provided evidence that teachers tried to manage and plan for engagement, so it was important to analyze these notecards further to determine if the theme that students were not engaged was an appropriate theme. The notecards listed above indicated concerns for why all students were not participating, why the teacher did not appear to monitor if all students were participating and if students were on task. However, there were two notecards in the Teacher Actions category that illustrated the teacher using proximity, walking around talking to students. Proximity was a strategy used to monitor engagement of students. Additionally, there were three notecards from the Curriculum and Instruction category and eight notecards included in the Student Actions category that indicated the use of engaging activities. Some examples of the notecards are listed below.

- Gave time to get the wiggles out and put listening ears on
- Students shared what their partner said
- Students shared their journals and other students gave feedback
- Students shared their writing with their class
- Students are sharing their writing
- Students are discussing how to make the world a better place

- Students are discussing what they did over winter break to prepare to write
- Students are writing about how to be successful

Having students not only share their thinking, but share the thinking of their partners showed the teacher intentionally planning to ensure students listened to each other and that students cared about what they were supposed to be discussing and writing. Additionally, the teacher that allowed students to get their wiggles out and put their listening ears on showed purposeful and responsive proactive strategies used to increase engagement. The conclusion that was drawn stated that engagement was low for students in Elementary School X, but teachers planned to have students participating in activities that encouraged them to work cooperatively and share about themselves. The notecards were evidence that teachers did some planning to try and engage students, but the conclusion was that there were low levels of student engagement.

Rigor. Rigor was the fifth and final subcategory for the present study. Schmidt, in an interview conducted by Jacobs and Colvin (2010), defined rigor as instruction that is purposeful, differentiated to challenge students at all levels, and connected to students' preferences and backgrounds. This subcategory was connected to the theme that lessons were not focused because without focus, lessons by definition cannot be rigorous. Also, the notecards for this subcategory suggested that students were not being appropriately challenged, which was also evidenced by the notecards for differentiation. There were a total of 23 notecards organized into this subcategory: five from Curriculum and Instruction, six from Teacher Actions, and 12 from Student Actions. The 23 notecards organized into this subcategory indicated varying levels of rigor. The Teacher Actions were less representative of rigor than the Student Actions category, and the Curriculum

and Instruction category included notecards that detailed concerns with the importance of the lessons and questioned whether or not the lesson activities were meaningful to students.

The six notecards from the Teacher Actions category are listed below.

- Teacher is dictating a sentence to students
- Teacher pulled a small group to help them write a sentence
- Teacher is presenting a picture for students to write to
- Teacher is guiding students sentence by sentence
- Students are copying a sentence the teacher wrote
- After students and the teacher shared, the teacher wrote the first sentence on the board for students to copy. Then the teacher told the students what to write next.

Having multiple instances of students copying what the teacher wrote indicated that students were not engaged in activities that required them to think. The depth of knowledge required for a student to copy off of a board is extremely low. Teachers pulling small groups to work on writing a sentence suggested that in order to support rigor, language development to allow students to develop their own sentences and understanding of the learning was necessary.

The 12 notecards from the Student Actions category detailed more rigorous activities than the Teacher Actions. Examples are listed below.

- Students are making a journal from the point of view of their explorer
- Students are writing independently
- Students are comparing and contrasting

- Students are deciding which Three Little Pigs was their favorite
- Students are reading silently
- Students corrected their own writing using the teacher model

Comparing and contrasting, developing a journal using evidence, and reading and writing independently move into depth of knowledge levels two and three, however, no notecards indicated students being engaged in activities that would be considered level four depth of knowledge such as designing and conducting experiments or synthesizing complex information. The other notecards in the Student Actions and Curriculum and Instruction categories further exemplified low levels of rigor and examples are listed below.

- Students are recopying the paragraph
- Students have the option of drawing a picture or writing a sentence
- Is there a way to accomplish this that would be more meaningful to students
- I wonder if moving students through writing process will students develop better independent writing skills
- I wonder if we had sentence stems for students and modeled for students before they started writing allowed them to brainstorm and prewrite would journals reflect comprehension at higher levels

Based on the repetition of notecards that illustrated low level cognitive activities such as students copying, teachers working with small groups of students on low level cognitive activities, the theme that emerged from the analysis of all 23 notecards was that instruction in Elementary School X was not rigorous.

Focusing the Lesson. Focusing the lesson was the third subcategory and only included cards from the Teacher Actions and Curriculum and Instruction categories. There were no notecards representative of students engaged in focusing lessons for themselves or their classmates. There were a total of eighteen notecards organized into the Focusing the Lesson subcategory: two from Teacher Actions and 16 from Curriculum and Instruction. Fourteen of the 18 notecards were illustrative of a lack of focus to lessons. The category that was highlighted in this subcategory the most was Curriculum and Instruction, which is to be expected as the notecards in the Curriculum and Instruction category were mostly questions and wonderings about the way lessons were planned and implemented.

The two notecards from the Teacher Actions subcategory are listed below.

- Teacher gave students guiding questions
- Teacher connects morning message to the lesson about comparing and contrasting

These two examples are illustrative of two times teachers were observed setting the focus of the lesson in some way. From the Curriculum and Instruction Category, there are two additional notecards that were also descriptive of teachers setting the focus.

- Having prompting guides at the guided reading table is a good strategy.
- Objectives posted and read to students

This was a total of four times out of the twenty-nine observation logs where there was evidence of teachers setting the focus of the lesson. One of the notecards was a bit of a stretch because it spoke more to the teacher being intentional about having the proper

resources and, prompting guides handy which could have supported focusing the lesson, but not necessarily that the lesson was focused.

The remaining 12 notecards represented questions and concerns expressed on the observation logs due to the lack of focus and intentionality of the lesson such as:

- How do students know what they are supposed to learn?
- I'm wondering what the purpose of the lesson was.
- Do you discuss the standard with students and allow them to explain what they are supposed to learn?
- Writing lessons need to be focused on standards to support students' success with performance task
- What is the goal of this lesson?

These notecards were representative of the theme that lessons in Elementary School X were not focused and targets and objectives were not used to focus lessons. There were several questions inquiring about where targets/objectives were posted, and only one notecard that stated the target/objective was posted. After reviewing the notecards, there was no evidence to disprove this theme. After concluding the data deconstruction phase and theme development, the next step in the study was to determine, of the five themes that emerged, what themes were reflective of Gay's culturally responsive teaching model.

Step 6. Comparing Themes to Gay's Model of Culturally Responsive Teaching. The process of comparing research generated themes to Gay's research, follows. To review, Gay's Six Characteristics of the culturally responsive teaching

model are: validating, comprehensive, multidimensional, empowering, transformative, and emancipatory.

The five themes from the present study were:

1. Differentiation was not observed being used as a strategy during teacher-student interactions in Elementary School X.
2. Language development of linguistically diverse students was achieved through cooperative learning opportunities.
3. Lessons in Elementary School X were not focused.
4. Students in Elementary School X had low levels of engagement with their learning.
5. Instruction in Elementary School X was not rigorous.

Of the five themes that emerged from the deconstruction of the archival direct observation data, one was reflective of Gay's culturally responsive teaching model. Language development of linguistically diverse students was achieved through cooperative learning opportunities. This theme was an example of educators being validating, multidimensional, empowering and transformative. The theme emerged from the Linguistic Diversity subcategory. Teachers modeled language development for students and students were engaged in cooperatively developing language. Supporting language development of students is characteristic of a validating, empowering, multidimensional, and transformative educator according to Gay (2000).

Validating educators are indicative of a celebratory atmosphere where students' strengths are central to how teachers make decisions in the classroom. Teachers who empower students, support language development, and allow students to work

cooperatively to build capacity and leadership. Additionally, transformative educators equip students with the content language necessary to advocate for equality in society and become supporters of social justice. The use of cooperative learning to build language for linguistically diverse students supports the notion that multidimensional educators value the voices of all students and provide opportunities for students to have responsibility not only for their own learning, but for the learning of their fellow classmates. The self-confidence that can be honed in students who are in classrooms that are empowering, speaks to the importance of allowing students to work cooperatively, especially to build language, because language is what allows communication to take place effectively. Communication is a definitive link to students' ability to be empowered to achieve academically.

The other four themes were not representative of any of the characteristics Gay outlined as being culturally responsive. The other four themes are potential areas for growth. Potential opportunities for growth for Elementary X are discussed in further detail in Chapter 5 in the Implications for Action section.

Summary

The student population in Elementary School X was culturally diverse. The present study determined that the deconstructing of observation logs was a more direct means of determining what teacher-student interactions were in urban, culturally diverse classrooms. Five themes emerged from the deconstruction of observation logs. The results of the analysis confirmed that teachers were meeting some of the language development needs of culturally diverse students. The analysis also confirmed that a focus on the interactions of students and teachers in urban schools could yield

information regarding what culturally responsive strategies were and were not being utilized in Elementary School X. With only evidence of one theme being reflective of Gay's culturally responsive teaching model, next steps will be presented that could improve the amount of culturally responsive teaching characteristics that could be observed in Elementary School X. Additionally, considerations for future research to extend the findings of the present study will be proposed.

Chapter 5

Interpretation and Recommendations

The researcher for the present study sought to examine culturally responsive practices in urban elementary classrooms extending the current research on teacher-student interactions by investigating the alignment of teacher-student interactions with Gay's model of culturally responsive teaching. Chapter 5 begins with a brief summary of Chapters 1-4. The problem, purposes, research question, methodology and findings are revisited. Research directly related to the present study's findings are referenced. Lastly, Chapter 5 concludes with what was learned from the study, implications for action, and recommendations for future research.

Study Summary

By focusing on culturally diverse elementary classrooms, the present study added to the literature on observing teacher-student interactions and culturally responsive teaching. Previous research on cultural responsiveness was referenced to define the context in which the archival observation logs were deconstructed. Ultimately, the goal was to determine if teacher-student interactions were reflective of Gay's culturally responsive teaching model by utilizing a qualitative methodology to deconstruct and analyze observation logs.

Overview of the problem. Although Gay's culturally responsive teaching model has been studied, there was little evidence of the use of direct observations to deconstruct teacher-student interactions specifically in culturally diverse, low-achieving elementary school classrooms in the Midwest of the United States. Additionally, it was unknown what themes would be found through the deconstructing of teacher-student interactions

where the majority of students were culturally diverse during the school year that culturally responsive teaching was a focus of professional development.

Purpose statement and research questions. The purpose of the current study was to deconstruct the observations of teacher-student interactions in culturally diverse, urban, low-achieving elementary school classrooms in the Midwest. Additionally, it was a focus of the present study to determine alignment of direct observations of teacher-student interactions with Gay's culturally responsive teaching model. Based on these two purposes, the research questions that needed to be answered were what themes emerged from the deconstructing of direct observations of teacher-student interactions and of those themes were any reflective of Gay's culturally responsive teaching model.

Review of the methodology. Teacher-student interactions in an urban, culturally diverse, urban, elementary school were the phenomena of focus. This focus on specific phenomenon made a qualitative methodology appropriate. The present study involved the use of archival data, which was reflective of the phenomena within its natural environment. There was a need to explore lived experiences of teachers in kindergarten through 5th-grade classrooms with culturally diverse students; the focus on lived experiences was the main consideration when implementing a phenomenology. The research design for the current study was a qualitative phenomenology with the use of archival data from observation logs.

Major findings. Five themes were deduced from the deconstruction of observation logs.

1. Differentiation was not observed being used as a strategy during teacher-student interactions in Elementary School X.

2. Language development of linguistically diverse students was achieved through cooperative learning opportunities.
3. Lessons in Elementary School X were not focused.
4. Students in Elementary School X had low levels of engagement with their learning.
5. Instruction in Elementary School X was not rigorous.

Of the five themes, one was reflective of Gay's culturally responsive teaching model. To review, the six characteristics of Gay's culturally responsive teaching model were validating, comprehensive, multidimensional, empowering, transformative, and emancipatory. The theme that explained how language development was observed in Elementary School X was representative of a validating, multidimensional, empowering, and transformative educator. According to Gay (2000), validating educators develop students socially. The use of cooperative learning to develop language allows students to build their language while working to support the development of their fellow classmates. Based on Gay's description (2000), empowering teachers scaffold language through the use of the cooperative learning strategies. Teachers were observed modeling language and then facilitating shared writing and shared reading experiences with students. These shared experiences provided a multidimensional layer to instruction, which involved students being able to work collaboratively to develop language across a variety of lessons and instructional activities. Additionally, teachers provided students with opportunities to experience language development in a way that could be transformative. Transformative education builds confidence in students. Developing students' ability to communicate using content language is one of the steps teachers can take to become

transformative. Students worked with a partner to respond to questions. Students were also observed using talking stems or sentence starters presented to them by their teacher. These methods of language development showed that in Elementary School X, teachers facilitated oral language development of students in culturally diverse classrooms.

Findings Related to the Literature

As a result of the five subcategories found and interpreted as themes through the analysis of data, the present study provided additional support for five areas of research. Those five areas of educational research are differentiation, linguistic diversity, student engagement, rigor, and focusing the lesson. In the next section, the present study's themes are revisited to serve as a comparison to related literature.

Differentiation. Tomlinson (2001) suggested there is a link between differentiation, instruction that meets the varying needs of learners, engagement, relevance, interest, and effective teaching. Researchers such as Mayfield (2012) explained how differentiated instruction provides educational access to students, while simultaneously allowing students to connect to instruction in ways that are appropriate based on the diverse needs of students. Tomlinson (2001) posited that when differentiation is present, engagement of students is present. Based on the present study findings, it is deduced that the opposite might also be true. When differentiation is absent, engagement is also absent. The present study to some extent supported this connection between differentiation and engagement because the themes that resulted based on differentiation and engagement state that both were absent from instruction in Elementary School X. Teachers who differentiate instruction believe learning is most effective when instruction engages students and students believe it is applicable to their

lives and their interests (Tomlinson, 2001). Instruction that supports students' differences, and allows them to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways was not evidenced in the observation logs for Elementary School X. If lessons had been differentiated, based on Wu's (2013) interpretation of the effect differentiation can have on how students feel, more culturally responsive characteristics might have been observed in Elementary School X.

Language Development of Linguistically Diverse Students. Netten, Luyten, Droop, and Verhoeven (2016) reported on the connection between self-efficacy beliefs and language development of linguistically diverse students. The present study, like Pullum (1999), considered students who either speak a different language, or a different vernacular of language than the language of the school environment, as students who are linguistically diverse. Therefore, in a culturally diverse school, a method teachers could use to build confidence of linguistically diverse students and motivate them would be to develop their language. Shapiro, Cox, Shuck, and Simnitt (2016) referenced how students who are linguistically diverse have strengths that can be enhanced in an inclusive environment. The findings of the present study were that language development of linguistically diverse students was accomplished through cooperative learning opportunities. Teachers and students together, interacted in ways that provided students with opportunities to hear, speak and write to enhance their language development. These findings suggest that the classroom environments in Elementary School X were providing opportunities to build self-efficacy or confidence in students and the environments had aspects that made them inclusive. However, additional data are needed to confirm the connection referenced in previous research between language

development and confidence. Student surveys, questionnaires, or interviews, focusing on students' perceived confidence and language development could be used to document a connection between language development and confidence.

Student Engagement. Traditional methods of instructing, whole class activities being the primary strategy used, are not engaging for students (Arseven, Sahin, & Kilic, 2016). Contrarily, culturally responsive educator's value the beliefs and life experiences of students, and use those beliefs and experiences to engage students in learning through authentic learning experiences. Cultural responsiveness provides student choice, and student choice engages students. In addition to choice in student-centered classrooms, Temizkan (2010) purported students should have authentic learning experiences as a part of regular instructional practices. In student-centered classrooms, the belief is that students who are engaged early in life experiences within the constructs of school and curriculum, will be engaged with their learning. In Elementary School X, teachers utilized traditional forms of teaching, which meant that all students were taught using repetitive strategies even though students were culturally diverse. The present study findings, which showed students were not engaged, along with the lack of differentiation in Elementary School X, provides additional evidence for the conclusions made in previous research that a lack of culturally responsive strategies being used in classrooms could be linked to a lack of engagement of students. With one theme from the deconstruction of observation logs being representative of culturally responsive teaching, the present study provides additional support for the ideology that teacher-centered classrooms are not representative of culturally responsive research because contrarily in student-centered classrooms, as in culturally responsive classrooms, students'

experiences and backgrounds are valued and used to enhance the curriculum. Elementary School X did not provide students with opportunities to engage in their learning where their preferences and backgrounds were the central focus of instruction.

Rigor. A rigorous classroom is closely aligned to a student-centered classroom, because in a rigorous classroom, students are doing the work (Marzano & Toth, 2014). The present study findings that instruction was not rigorous, teachers were engaged in whole class instruction, and students were not engaged, are all supportive of the connection drawn in previous research that rigor is linked to student engagement and student-centered classrooms. Having analyzed over two million data sets, Toth and Marzano argued that fewer than 6% of the observations from the data reflected instruction that was cognitively complex (Marzano & Toth, 2014). The present study findings supports the findings of previous research that the majority of lessons were not rigorous.

Focusing the Lesson. Lessons that have intentionality of goals, and clear outcomes are focused (Ayres, 2014). Assessments of learning for students are no longer a mystery in classrooms with lessons that are focused. Lessons that are focused progress along the continuum of rigor and increase in complexity to offer students more opportunities to practice critical thinking. The present study did not include evidence of lessons being focused. Additionally, instruction was not tailored to students, or differentiated, and students were not engaged in rigorous activities. If lessons were focused in Elementary School X, that would have required teachers to be intentional about the outcomes of the lesson and the goals. Intentionality in lesson planning that is reflective of students' varying needs is culturally responsive.

In conclusion, each of the five areas discussed were reflective of opportunities for teaching in Elementary School X to be enhanced, or celebrated. Language development of linguistically diverse students in Elementary School X was reflective of Gay's model and indicated an area that teachers were interacting to meet the varied needs of students by being validating, empowering, multidimensional, and transformative. Differentiation, student engagement, rigor, and focusing lessons are all areas where there is a need for additional professional development and opportunities for advancement of teachers. Teachers were still teaching as if all students were the same. The amount of whole class instruction and students participating in activities that were not differentiated suggested that teachers did not shift instruction based on students' diverse needs or abilities. Teachers in culturally diverse, urban elementary classrooms did not utilize students' cultures, interests and backgrounds to make connections to the curriculum.

Conclusions

Based on the study findings, implications for action and recommendations for future research are prescribed. Observation logs from Elementary School X illustrated several areas for growth as it relates to culturally responsive teaching practices. The most important aspect of supporting the growth of teachers, and ultimately students, is to determine what is happening with teacher-student interactions in the classroom. Below, are suggestions for how to better assess whether or not effective, culturally responsive teaching is occurring in culturally diverse, urban, schools.

Implications for action. Teacher-student interactions indicated that lessons were not differentiated, lessons were not rigorous, lessons were not focused, and students were not engaged. Differentiation is a strategy that teachers could use to increase rigor,

engagement, and make lessons focused on developing the learning objectives students need to master that are appropriately challenging for students at various levels (Tomlinson & Moon, 2013). There are four major implications for action for administrators in public, urban, culturally diverse elementary schools. First, in order to determine what teacher-student interactions are in culturally diverse, urban elementary classrooms, administrators should complete observations using observation logs and deconstruct the logs to determine if teacher-student interactions are reflective of culturally responsive strategies. Secondly, if teacher-student interactions are not reflective of culturally responsive strategies, administrators should create a professional development plan that focuses on Gay's model of culturally responsive teaching to support teachers in the implementation of more rigorous, differentiated, engaging and focused lessons. Third, additional observations using observation logs should be conducted to determine the effectiveness of professional development. Fourth, professional development for teachers should be differentiated, demonstrating strategies teachers could use in their classrooms to formatively assess students and base instruction on connecting cultural diversity.

Gay's model provides parameters for what could be considered effective teaching for culturally diverse classrooms. Using the model to compare deconstructed observation logs would be supportive of determining what the teacher-student interactions are in classrooms. Culturally responsive teaching can be a focus of professional development, and with follow-up and continued observation, administrators can better determine how to make culturally responsive teaching a priority in school buildings with culturally diverse students.

Recommendations for future research. There are studies based on culturally responsive teaching that have illustrated the benefits of educators in urban culturally diverse schools using culturally responsive strategies to support student achievement and development (Averill, Anderson, & Drake, 2015; Curtis, 2013; Gay, 2013; Haddix, 2010; Hramiak, 2015; Jackson, 2013; Mayfield, 2012; McMakin, 2012). Based on the present study findings, only one of the themes that emerged from Elementary School X was reflective of Gay's culturally responsive teaching model. Language development of linguistically diverse students was achieved through cooperative learning opportunities providing evidence that educators in Elementary School X were validating, empowering, multidimensional, and transformative. Based on the present study findings, recommendations for future research were presented.

First, future studies should utilize a mixed methods approach to the observation and deconstruction of teacher-student interactions in public, urban, and culturally diverse elementary classrooms. Qualitative methods were used in the present study and provided school-wide themes. Future research, if there were quantitative components, would be able to determine themes based on a specified number of observations being completed at each grade level. Some quantitative components could include utilizing set numbers of observations of each teacher at each grade level to code data and find correlations between variables.

Secondly, the inclusion of a culturally responsive teaching observation tool to deconstruct observation logs would yield quantitative results that could be used to support the findings of the qualitative observation logs especially because observing some culturally responsive teaching strategies may be more difficult. The culturally

responsive observation tool would have predetermined evidences of teacher-student interactions that could be scored and used to draw conclusions based on specific culturally responsive characteristics. Additionally, a culturally responsive teaching observation tool would detail observable teacher-student interactions that were reflective of culturally responsive teaching. Administrators and teachers could use the culturally responsive teaching observation tool to focus professional development and differentiate professional development based on data from the culturally responsive observation tool.

The third recommendation for future research would be to use teacher demographics to determine if teacher racial makeup, teacher longevity in the school, teacher-student ratios, or the use of an effective mentoring program for teachers has a significant impact on the implementation of culturally responsive teaching strategies. Additionally, teacher demographics regarding teacher preparation programs could be used to determine if there are significant differences in teachers' ability to implement culturally responsive teaching strategies based on the teacher preparation program they attended. Teacher preparation programs could conduct studies of recent graduates to determine if their teacher preparation programs yielded culturally responsive educators based on the collection of data from observation logs and a culturally responsive teaching observation tool.

Lastly, when furthering the research to determine if teacher-student interactions are reflective of Gay's culturally responsive teaching model, especially when trying to determine if educators are transformative and emancipatory, additional assessment measures may be required, such as student surveys. This would provide a student

perspective on whether or not students felt teachers were able to support them in their self-efficacy beliefs and development of self-confidence.

Concluding remarks. Teachers and students interact daily having hundreds of interactions. With the increasingly diverse student population, particularly in urban public schools, it is necessary to determine how teachers are interacting with students in culturally diverse classrooms. The consistent increase in the number of culturally diverse students could be considered a major change in society that indicates reforms in educational practices are necessary, just as the development of Sputnik in the 1960's sparked new interest in increasing rigor in classrooms across the country. With the increase in diversity in public school classrooms, educators could determine that culturally diverse students should be taught in ways that meet their varying needs. Additional studies focused on the education of culturally diverse students could prompt a reform in education that would enable teachers to interact in culturally responsive ways.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Sample Observation Log

Date/Role	Goal	Observation Notes	Learning Focused Conversation
8/27/14	Interactive Read Aloud	<p>Kindergarten</p> <p>Began with partner talk practice. Had students make predictions with turn and talk. Set purpose for reading. Teacher read a fairytale. Teacher called on students randomly using talking sticks with student names on them. Teacher did not intentionally scaffold language or vocabulary. The lesson seemed to lose student engagement after 20 minutes.</p>	<p>How could you have students reflect on what they could do better?</p> <p>I'm wondering where you post your standard that you are covering. Do you have students do a shared reading of the standard, so they can tell you what they are supposed to be able to do at the end of the lesson?</p> <p>I'm wondering if the purpose was to make predictions. Do you tell the students the purpose of their reading before they begin?</p> <p>Great way to practice turn and talk procedure.</p> <p>I really like how you use student sticks to ensure all students are held accountable.</p> <p>Having them speak in complete sentences will improve their writing when they get to that point.</p> <p>I loved how you gave them time to get the wiggles out and put their listening ears on.</p>

Appendix B: Example of Undetailed/Unfinished Coaching Log

Date/Role	Goal	Observation Notes	Learning Focused Conversation	Next Steps
11/7/14 Classroom Supporter	Writing Process	Teacher is having students decide which version of the Three Little Pigs is their favorite. Students are going to listen to the story and then	I wonder if you could do a book introduction to help students understand any unfamiliar vocabulary so that when you read the story, you do not have to stop as much.	Teacher will complete the debriefing sheet.

Appendix C: Email Giving Researcher Permission to Use Data

[REDACTED]

3/24/15

[REDACTED]

Director of DERA

[REDACTED]

Dear Mr. [REDACTED]

Dana Jackson has my permission, [REDACTED], principal of [REDACTED] Elementary School, to use the data she collected from [REDACTED] staff members during the 2014-2015 school year in her dissertation for her doctoral degree from Baker University. Please notify her as soon as possible that she has been approved. She needs the approval from you so that she can finish her degree program.

Thank you,



Dr. [REDACTED]
Principal, [REDACTED] School

Appendix D: IRB Form

**SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
GRADUATE DEPARTMENT**



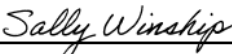

IRB PROTOCOL NUMBER _____
(IRB USE ONLY)

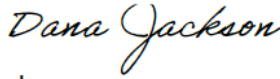
Date: March 8, 2017

**IRB REQUEST
Proposal for Research
Submitted to the Baker University Institutional Review Board**

I. Research Investigator(s) (Students must list faculty sponsor first)

Department(s) School of Education Graduate Department

Name	Signature	
1. Sally Winship		Major Advisor
2. Phillip Messner	 <small>Digitally signed by Phillip E. Messner DN: cn=Phillip E. Messner, o=Baker University, ou=Professor, email=pmessner@bakeru.edu, c=US Date: 2017.04.06 10:29:07 -05'00'</small>	Research Analyst
3.		University Committee Member
4.		External Committee Member

Principal Investigator: Dana Latrice Jackson 
Phone: (816) 729-7185
Email: danalcarroll@stu.bakeru.edu
Mailing address: 9113 Garfield Ave, Kansas City, KS 66112

Faculty sponsor: Sally Winship
Phone:
Email: sally.winship@bakeru.edu
Expected Category of Review: Exempt Expedited Full

II: Protocol Title

Using Gay's Culturally Responsive Teaching Model as a Lens to Deconstruct Direct Observations of Teacher and Student Interactions in Diverse Urban Elementary School Classrooms

Summary

The following summary must accompany the proposal. Be specific about exactly what participants will experience, and about the protections that have been included to safeguard participants from harm. Careful attention to the following may help facilitate the review process:

Appendix E: IRB Approval Letter



Baker University Institutional Review Board

April 19, 2017

Dear Dana Jackson and Dr. Winship,

The Baker University IRB has reviewed your research project application and approved this project under Exempt Status Review. As described, the project complies with all the requirements and policies established by the University for protection of human subjects in research. Unless renewed, approval lapses one year after approval date.

Please be aware of the following:

1. Any significant change in the research protocol as described should be reviewed by this Committee prior to altering the project.
2. Notify the IRB about any new investigators not named in original application.
3. When signed consent documents are required, the primary investigator must retain the signed consent documents of the research activity.
4. If this is a funded project, keep a copy of this approval letter with your proposal/grant file.
5. If the results of the research are used to prepare papers for publication or oral presentation at professional conferences, manuscripts or abstracts are requested for IRB as part of the project record.

Please inform this Committee or myself when this project is terminated or completed. As noted above, you must also provide IRB with an annual status report and receive approval for maintaining your status. If you have any questions, please contact me at EMorris@BakerU.edu or 785.594.7881.

Sincerely,

Erin Morris PhD
Chair, Baker University IRB

Baker University IRB Committee
Joe Watson PhD
Nate Poell MA
Susan Rogers PhD
Scott Crenshaw

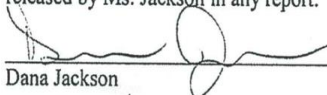
Appendix F: Data Utilization Agreement

Survey and Data Utilization Agreement

The [redacted] Public Schools (hereinafter referred to as the District) and Dana Jackson have entered into an agreement under which Ms. Jackson shall be given permission use data collected using various instruments at [redacted] Elementary School.

Ms. Jackson will adhere to all provisions for confidentiality and protection of student and teacher information as described in the U.S. Department of Education's Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232h; 34 CFR Part 98) and The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99).

No identifiable information regarding any District student, teacher, or school shall be released by Ms. Jackson in any report.


Dana Jackson

Dana Jackson

Printed Name

3/25/15

Date

[redacted] 
Board of Education



Printed Name

3/26/15

Date

Appendix G: Role of the Instructional Coach

The purpose of an instructional coach for Elementary School X was to change teacher practice. Additionally, instructional coaches planned and implemented professional development for the teachers and staff. Instructional coaches, in partnership with the administrators, supported teachers to improve student achievement through observations, conversations, and modeling. The executive directors of the school district evaluated instructional coaches, along with administrators. As a method of evaluation to determine the effectiveness of instructional coaches in District X, the instructional coach supervisors, the lead instructional coaches and the executive directors for the school district, also viewed the observation logs of instructional coaches. The leadership team also viewed the observations for Elementary School X, which included the principal, assistant principal, and the other instructional coach.

Appendix H: Researcher Bias Journal

Prior to Starting the Research Study

I am the catalyst for this study. First, I was a student in a culturally diverse school district. Then I became a teacher in the same district. This is when my interest in the research of culturally responsive teaching started. After finishing my principal certification, I became an adjunct instructor in a school of education. I taught classes on culturally responsive teaching. Through this experience, I developed my understanding of the importance of culturally responsive educators and schools. Being a person of color, I have been fascinated with the role education has played in continuing the inequitable attainment of success. Working with families in poverty and teachers who were primarily vastly different than my students and even myself, I knew there was a need to look more in-depth at how our societal structure continues to persist where certain groups of people experience poverty at a higher rate, are incarcerated at higher rates, and do not experience academic success at the rate of White students. I wanted to write this down because I want to be transparent about my reasons for starting this study to help mitigate any effects my personal biases might have on the study.

Thoughts on Bias While Writing Chapter 1

I wanted to create an opening chapter that addressed the conditions that led to the creation of Gay's culturally responsive teaching model. The conditions included the achievement gap affecting students of color, the disproportionate number of White teachers in public schools, the growing population of diverse students in public schools, the growing number of students of color being referred to special education, among other topics that speak to the complications that have arose due to the cultural divide between teachers and students. Each of these topics could have been a research study of its own.

With the guidance of my dissertation advisors, I limited the amount of information I included in Chapter 1. I felt like my study would not be complete without all of these details, but after many revisions, I understand that my desire to include all of this information that was not directly related to my study was a result of my biases having an impact on the way I was writing this chapter.

Thoughts on Bias While Writing Chapter 2

During the writing of this chapter, I realized I was including a lot of the historical information, such as *Brown vs. Board of Education*, critical race theory, and other pertinent historical information that impacts how students of colors are viewed by teachers and how they feel in the school environment because I wanted to satiate my personal bias as a student of color. I wanted to recognize that students of color in the United States are facing a world that has been built on devaluing their cultures and their potential to achieve at the highest levels. This academic system is a part of the infrastructure that perpetuates the inequitable distribution of wealth seen in the United States. After submitting my chapter 2 to my advisors, I was able to recreate the structure of this chapter to only include information pertinent for the current study.

Thoughts on Bias While Writing Chapter 3

In chapter 3, I was required to list the experiences I have had that may lead to potential bias. This was pertinent to the current study because as one of the instruments in the current study, I wanted to make sure that my data collection process was transparent and applicable for future research. I also wanted to ensure that my data collection and analysis of the direct observations aligned with the lens I was using, which was Gay's model for culturally responsive teaching. Throughout the writing of this

chapter, I ensured the validity of the study by using multiple tests for validity. I also continued to log my thoughts about the study in this journal. This chapter didn't present as many challenges related to my biases as the previous chapters. I believe I am starting to get the hang of writing this study using only the research and not my personal experiences with the setting that I am studying.

Thoughts on Bias While Writing Chapter 4

Chapter 4 was probably the most important chapter as it relates to my acknowledgement of bias. The results of the affinity diagramming process pushed my thinking on the observation logs, because they were dissected down to sentences, and words to find trends that eventually led to themes. I enjoyed the processes involved in chapter 4 because it was eye opening to look at the observation logs in a new, exploratory way. I think the use of the affinity diagramming process and the need to find trends based on evidence of repetition of words and phrases, the conclusions came from the research and my prior knowledge of curriculum and instruction. Each theme that emerged was linked directly to the evidence from the observation logs and what research has defined as the different areas that were the subcategories of the data. My personal wish was that there would have been more evidence of cultural responsiveness in the observation logs, however, I was excited that teachers were observed using some strategies that were referenced in the research to be supportive of linguistic diversity. Going into the analysis of the data, I did not know I would deduce this theme, so it was exciting when new information came to light.

Thoughts on Bias While Writing Chapter 5

I was excited to write chapter 5 because there was a sense that I would be able to finally recommend some of the future research that I believe would be helpful to the improvement of students' who are culturally diverse educational paths. I wanted to make sure that the suggestions that I made in chapter 5 would be supportive of administrators attempting to utilize observation logs to determine effective teacher-student interactions in urban culturally diverse schools. My bias towards what I believed teachers and students were doing in urban settings did not hinder my ability to speak to the research that I conducted or to report on the research that has already been done in this area. I am excited to say that through my bias, I have felt that this study has been one of discovery and exploration and I look forward to setting the stage for future research in the areas of culturally responsive teaching and urban education.

Appendix I: Tables

Table I1

The Five Subcategories for Curriculum and Instruction

Differentiation	Linguistic Diversity	Focusing the Lesson	Student Engagement	Rigor
What are you doing for students who need extra support?	Great way to practice turn and talk	I'm a little confused about the instructions.	How could you have students reflect on what they could do better?	I wonder if students wanted to write the same sentences as you
How much background knowledge do students have on differences of city and the country	I wonder how this lesson would have been different if you used an anchor chart.	I wonder if you could have instead wrote sentences that reflected what you read in the MLK book.	I wonder how you can ensure that all students have to talk.	Is there a way to accomplish this that would be more meaningful to students.
I noticed some writers already knew how to use transition words.	I wonder how using talking stems would support oral language and writing.	Where do you post the lesson target?	I wonder how you could make your lesson go faster.	I wonder if moving students through writing process will students develop better independent writing skills

Need to give students choice with parameters	Good use of prior anchor chart.	How do students know what they are supposed to learn?	Used timer to keep students at centers on track.	I wonder if we had sentence stems for students and modeled for students before they started writing allowed them to brainstorm and prewrite would journals reflect comprehension at higher levels
High students are just sitting	What language supports have you used to better support linguistically diverse students?	I'm wondering what the purpose of the lesson was.	Book connected to students' lives.	I like that you used an explorer to model. I'm wondering if you could have used a different one than what student have to use to write.
I wonder how you can differentiate because you have some very high students that are just sitting.	I wonder if personal word walls would help students.	Objectives posted and read to students	Engaging text for students	
	I wonder how creating an anchor chart would be helpful.	I wonder where you post your standards.		

You should have student speak in complete sentences to give them an opportunity to practice oral language.

Do you discuss the standard with students and allow them to explain what they are supposed to learn?

Student who only speaks Spanish is struggling to write a sentence.

Writing lessons need to be focused on standards to support students' success with performance task

Why didn't you correct students when they misspelled words during shared writing.

What is the goal of this lesson?

How are you using accountable talk stems?

I don't understand the purpose of this lesson.

Could you have student do a shared reading of the vocabulary to build oral language?

I wonder if keeping conferring notes on writers would help focus conversations with students

How are you modeling and then allowing students to practice oral language?	How could you plan more intentionally?
Began with partner talk practice	I wonder if you focus on one mistake and have students correct their own writing if it would have a greater effect on their long term writing.
I'm wondering how language development could have been supported.	Having prompting guides at the guided reading table is a good strategy.
I'm wondering how an anchor chart would have added to the lesson.	Primary students using intermediate notebooks is not supportive of letter formation.
I wonder how you could co-construct an anchor chart with students to push their thinking	

I wonder if you
could do a book
intro to help
students
understand any
unfamiliar
vocabulary

How do you
plan to scaffold
language so
students can be
successful with
that type of
writing?

Note. The table includes the sentences and phrases quoted from the notecards used in the present study, which were obtained from the archival data from the observation logs.

Table I2

The Five Subcategories for Teacher Actions

Differentiation	Linguistic Diversity	Focusing the Lesson	Student Engagement	Rigor
Teacher brainstormed ideas for differentiated learning centers	Teacher did an interactive writing	Teacher gave students guiding questions	Teacher is going around the room talking to students	Teacher is dictating a sentence to students
Teacher is reading a story about a snowman	Teacher referred to a poster for vocabulary words	Teacher connects morning message to the lesson about comparing and contrasting	Teacher is conferring with students	Teacher pulled a small group to help them write a sentence
Teacher is making a list of what is needed to make a snowman	Teacher is correcting a paragraph on the board and discussing mistakes			Teacher is presenting a picture for students to write to
Teacher is telling students about MLK	Teacher modeled how to edit a text.			Teacher is guiding students sentence by sentence
Teacher is reading I Have a Dream	Teacher wrote a model text about what she did over winter break			Students are copying a sentence the teacher wrote

Teacher is making a list to record what students say

Teacher is doing a shared writing of a sentence that models the kinds of sentences students have to write

After students and the teacher shared, the teacher wrote the first sentence on the board for students to copy. Then the teacher told the students what to write next.

Teacher is sharing her thinking

Teacher is modeling how to start their sentences about what they need for a snowman

Teacher is comparing and contrasting

Teacher is making a list with pictures so students can read the words

Teacher is reading a story about MLK

Teacher is asking students “Who is the same age as the character?”

Teacher is reviewing with

students the
books they've
read.

Teacher is
reading Happy
Birthday MLK

Teacher is
thinking aloud

Teacher read
Each Kindness

Teacher read
Goldilocks and
the 3 Bears

Teacher read a
book about
winter

Teacher read
The Other Side

Teacher made a
list of
characters and
setting

Students are
listening to the
teacher read a
story

Students are
listening to The
Three Little
Pigs

Note. The table includes the sentences and phrases quoted from the notecards used in the present study,
which were obtained from the archival data from the observation logs.

Table I3

The Five Subcategories for Student Actions

Differentiation	Linguistic Diversity	Student Engagement	Rigor
Students are brainstorming ideas for the title of a story together	Teacher is having students use talking stems to make predictions	Students are writing about how to be successful	Students are making a journal from the point of view of their explorer
Students are preparing to write How To essays	Students are doing a shared reading of morning message	Students are discussing what they did over winter break to prepare to write	Students are writing independently
Students are giving examples from the text to make a snowman	Students are helping teacher sound out words	Students are discussing how to make the world a better place	Students are comparing and contrasting
Students are gathering info for the explorer project with a partner	Students are helping the teacher write how to make PB&J sandwich	Students are sharing their writing	Students are deciding which Three Little Pigs was their favorite
Students discussed setting	Students are using a sentence starter, "I see..."	Students shared their writing with their class	Students are recopying the paragraph
Students and teacher answered the question, should Clover be friends with Annie?	Students are adding words to their word walls	Students shared their journals and other students gave feedback	Students are going to write
Students and teacher filled in a graphic organizer	Students are to use the sentence starter and complete the sentence	Students shared what their partner said	Students are reading silently
Students brainstormed	Students are supposed to use	Gave time to get the wiggles out and	Students corrected their own writing

together ideas for character names	word walls and list teacher made to find words	put listening ears on	using the teacher model
Students chose what names they want to use	Students are writing a sentence using a sentence starter	You would be able to monitor who is talking and if it is appropriate	Students have the option of drawing a picture or writing a sentence
Students used a graphic organizer	Students turned and talked	I wonder if you assigned partners A & B if you could ensure all students participate	Students read silently to themselves
Students partner read	Students turned and talked	Spoke to some students engagement is low	Having students make predictions
Students started getting distracted because they already knew how to use transition words	Students did a shared reading	I wonder if you tell students that you are going to stop and then they will be able to be more focused	Had students make predictions
	Students did a shared reading of the morning message	What do you do for students who do not follow instruction while working independently	
	Students did a shared reading	How are you monitoring the room to let students know that they are to be work	
	Students using word wall to sound out words		

Note. The table includes the sentences and phrases quoted from the notecards used in the present study, which were obtained from the archival data from the observation logs.